



EAST SUFFOLK COUNCIL

LEISURE STRATEGY

NOVEMBER 2021

Integrity, Innovation, Inspiration

1-2 Frecheville Court ◀ off Knowsley Street ◀ Bury BL9 0UF
T 0161 764 7040 ◀ **F** 0161 764 7490 ◀ **E** mail@kcp.co.uk ◀ **www.kcp.co.uk**



EAST SUFFOLK COUNCIL LEISURE STRATEGY

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
POLICY CONTEXT	2
APPROACH	18
KEY FINDINGS	21
STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS	37

INTRODUCTION

East Suffolk Council commissioned a suite of studies to provide an up-to-date evidence base and to help inform future decision-making processes. The objectives of the studies extend across multiple East Suffolk departments and partners and are summarised below:

- ◀ To help deliver the health and wellbeing agenda
- ◀ To inform the capital programme for ESC
- ◀ To inform Local Plan policy
- ◀ To set the Leisure Facilities plan within the context of the Local Plan and wider strategies for parks, green spaces, and community development
- ◀ To inform sports development initiatives
- ◀ To reflect wider ESC asset reviews
- ◀ To help facilitate community use of outdoor facilities on education sites
- ◀ Follow the Sport England best practice guidance
- ◀ Setting a framework for the strategic approach to sport and leisure delivery at some key sites within the district

It can also importantly help to support and inform wider council priorities such as green technology/energy initiatives, green infrastructure, and rural access.

Each study is intended to help inform and guide decision making processes relevant to that element and should help inform the requirements for such forms of provision with regard to future housing and population growth.

The documents developed include the following:

- ◀ Open Space Report and Play Strategy
- ◀ Indoor and Built Sports Facilities Strategy
- ◀ Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy (PPOSS)

The key focus for the documents is that the initial three studies (open spaces, indoor sports facilities and playing pitch strategies) provide the planning related evidence base across East Suffolk and identify a way to develop improved facilities for residents.

In delivering each of the studies KKP has followed the relevant national guidance and methodology which ensures that East Suffolk has a robust evidence base which informs future planning policy and wider investment decisions.

Collaborative approach

Although East Suffolk Council has taken the lead in developing the above strategic documents as part of its evidence base, it is recognised that it alone is not responsible for delivering all of the recommendations and actions. The Council requires a collaborative approach with its national, regional and local stakeholders to deliver the key recommendations and health and wellbeing outcomes that the documents identify.

The strategies do not apportion direct responsibility for specific recommendations and actions to single organisations. In some instances these will be Council led but supported by external stakeholders, whereas in others they will be led by local clubs and organisations in partnership with their respective national governing bodies of sport and where the Council has no specific role to play.

A key aspect of the Leisure Strategy is to guide future development and growth in understanding the wider needs and opportunities across East Suffolk when developing new housing and infrastructure projects. This seeks to ensure that as much as possible, a holistic approach to delivering health and wellbeing outcomes is achieved from new development.

POLICY CONTEXT

National Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework 2021

The National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) (NPPF) sets out the planning policies for England. It details how these are expected to be applied to the planning system and provides a framework to produce distinct local and neighbourhood plans, reflecting the needs and priorities of local communities.

It states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It establishes that the planning system needs to focus on three themes of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. A presumption in favour of sustainable development is a key aspect for any plan-making and decision-taking processes. In relation to plan-making the NPPF sets out that Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs.

Paragraph 98 establishes that access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for health and well-being. It states that planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. Specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficiencies and surpluses in local areas should also be identified. This information should be used to inform what provision is required in an area.

Sport England: Uniting the Movement 2021

Sport and physical activity have a big role to play in improving the physical and mental health of the nation, supporting the economy, reconnecting communities and rebuilding a stronger society for all following the global pandemic. Referencing this, Sport England has recently released its new strategy, Uniting the Movement, its 10-year vision to transform lives and communities through sport and physical activity.

It seeks to tackle the inequalities long seen in sport and physical activity. Providing opportunities to people and communities that have traditionally been left behind, and helping to remove the barriers to activity, has never been more important. The three key objectives are illustrated below:



As well as being an advocate for sport and physical activity, though the building of evidence and partnership development, the Strategy identifies five big issues that people and communities need to work together to address. They are cited as being some of the biggest challenges to an active nation over the next decade and are also the greatest opportunities to make a lasting difference.

EAST SUFFOLK COUNCIL LEISURE STRATEGY

Each one is a building block that, on its own, would make a difference, but tackled collectively, could change things profoundly:

- ◀ *Recover and reinvent*: Recovering from the biggest crisis in a generation and reinventing as a vibrant, relevant and sustainable network of organisations providing sport and physical activity opportunities that meet the needs of different people.
- ◀ *Connecting communities*: Focusing on sport and physical activity's ability to make better places to live and bring people together.
- ◀ *Positive experiences for children and young people*: Unrelenting focus on positive experiences for children and young people as the foundations for a long and healthy life.
- ◀ *Connecting with health and wellbeing*: Strengthening the connections between sport, physical activity, health and wellbeing, so more people can feel the benefits of, and advocate for, an active life.
- ◀ *Active environments*: Creating and protecting the places and spaces that make it easier for people to be active.

To address these five big issues, the right conditions for change need to be created: involving people, organisations and partnerships to help convert plans and ideas. This will include a range of actions, including the development of effective investment models and applying innovation and digital technology to ensure sport and physical activity are more accessible.

Planning for Sport Guidance (2019), Sport England

Sets out how the planning system can help provide opportunities for everyone to be physically active. It highlights the vital role planning systems play in shaping environments (including open spaces) which offer opportunities to take part in sport and physical activity. To help with this, the guidance sets out 12 planning-for-sport principles to be embraced.

12 planning for sport principles

Overarching	Recognise and give weight to the benefits of sport and physical activity
	Undertake, maintain and apply robust and up-to-date assessment of need and strategies for sport and physical activity provision, and base policies, decisions and guidance upon them
	Plan, design and maintain buildings, developments, facilities, land and environments that enable people to lead active lifestyles
Protect	Protect and promote existing sport and physical activity provision and ensure new development does not prejudice its use
	Ensure long-term viable management and maintenance of new and existing sport and physical activity provision
Enhance	Support improvements to existing sport and physical activity provision where they are needed
	Encourage and secure wider community use of existing and new sport and physical activity provision
Provide	Support new provision, including allocating new sites for sport and physical activity which meets identified needs
	Ensure a positive approach to meeting the needs generated by new development for sport and physical activity provision
	Provide sport and physical activity provision which is fit for purpose and well designed
	Plan positively for sport and physical activity provision in designated landscapes and the green belt

EAST SUFFOLK COUNCIL LEISURE STRATEGY

	Proactively address any amenity issues arising from sport and physical activity developments
--	--

Local Policy Context

East Suffolk Council Strategic Plan (2020-2024)

The Strategic Plan provides the framework to deliver a range of vital services for local communities. The ambition is to deliver the best possible quality of life for everyone who lives in, works in and visits East Suffolk. It is structured around the following five themes:

ESC Strategic Plan (2020-2024) key themes and aims:

Theme	Aim
Growing our economy	To build a strong sustainable economy for the future so that will achieve its maximum potential, for the good of everyone in the area.
Enabling our communities	Working together, ESC will enable communities to identify opportunities and challenges. It will empower them to make a difference. It will also support communities to enhance the places for living and working and for the wellbeing of all.
Remaining financially sustainable	To grow and prosper as a council; ESC will ensure it is well-run; providing value for money and strive for excellence.
Delivering digital transformation	Digital technology can transform the way we work and live; ESC will use technology to make services efficient and easily accessible to all and assist communities to embrace and access new technologies.
Caring for our environment	The environment be put at the heart of everything ESC does.

Local plans; former Suffolk Coastal and Waveney local authorities

East Suffolk was formed in 2019 following the merger of Waveney District Council and Suffolk Coastal District Council, as a result there are two existing Local Plans for East Suffolk. The Suffolk Coastal Local Plan covers the period 2018-2036 and The Waveney Local Plan covers the period 2014-2036. Both plans share the same vision and strategic priorities to:

'Maintain and sustainably improve the quality of life for everyone growing up in, living in, working in and visiting the area'.

The vision is accompanied by nine strategic priorities. In relation to health and wellbeing, the priority is to support healthy, safe, cohesive and active communities by improving health, wellbeing and education opportunities for all. This will be achieved via a range of education, health and leisure provision to meet localised need and create sustainable communities across the area.

Waveney Green Infrastructure Strategy (2015)

The document recognises a well connected and diverse green infrastructure network can provide a variety of benefits for people and wildlife. It sets out a coordinated approach towards improving the existing green infrastructure network by ensuring the right types of green spaces are provided where they are most needed and that improvements are made in areas where they will provide the greatest benefit.

EAST SUFFOLK COUNCIL LEISURE STRATEGY

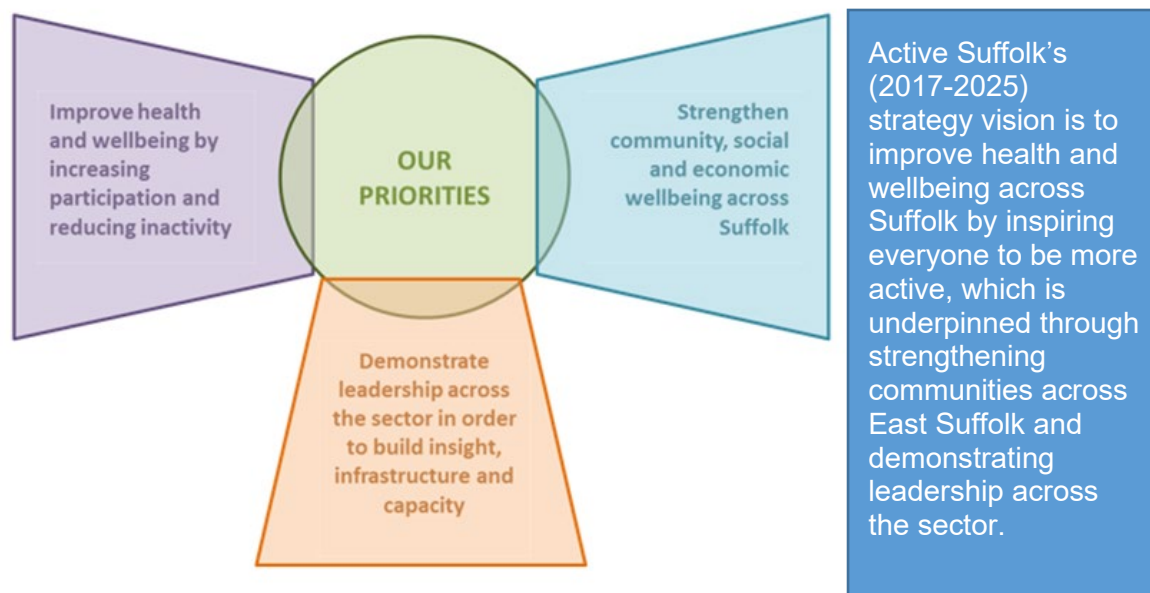
The Strategy sets out key objectives to:

- ◀ Brings together information from different evidence bases, identifies potential ways to improve existing shortfalls and prioritises areas most in need of improvement. These can be used to inform planning decisions.
- ◀ Sets out key principles to ensure the right types of green infrastructure are provided where they are most needed. Considering how green spaces can be included in a proposal early in the design process will improve the overall quality of new development.
- ◀ Identifies gaps in the existing green infrastructure network. This will help the Council, Town and Parish Councils, developers, community groups and external organisations to proactively take advantage of opportunities when they arise to improve the quality and connectivity of the network.
- ◀ Provides a coordinated approach to the planning and delivery of green infrastructure to maximise the long-term benefit for people and wildlife.
- ◀ Raises awareness of green infrastructure, existing local issues and potential opportunities that will enable communities to achieve their aspirations.

Suffolk Active Partnership

Active Suffolk is one of 43 active partnerships the majority of which cover former administrative county areas across the whole of England. It is committed to increasing the number of people taking part in sport and physical activity through working with a wide range of partners including local authorities, national governing bodies (NGB's), the education sector, the health sector, charitable/voluntary organisations and third sector organisations.

Active Suffolk's Strategic Priorities



East Suffolk Community Partnerships

Eight East Suffolk community partnerships were set up in 2019, and inclusive of a range of local organisations (parish councils, CCGs, voluntary organisations, police, local business). These each hold an annual local delivery budget of £25,000 for 2020/21 and 2021/22 and have agreed a set of priority work areas which have been reviewed in the light of the Coronavirus pandemic. In addition, an overarching partnership board has been convened, representative of the eight partnerships with a delivery budget of c.£1million. This has adopted social isolation and community transport, which feature as issues across multiple community partnerships, as the top priorities.

East Suffolk Community Partnership priorities



Community Partnership Priorities

Lowestoft and northern parishes	Kesgrave, Rushmere St Andrew, Martlesham, Carlford and Fynn Valley	Melton, Woodbridge and Deben Peninsula	Carlton Colville, Kessingland, Southwold and villages
Improve mental health and wellbeing (45)	Reduce social isolation & loneliness	Active and sustainable transport provision	Active and sustainable transport provision, particularly rural
Tackle childhood obesity	Environmental care and sustainable transport	Village Hub – bringing services to people	Reduce social isolation and loneliness
Reduce social isolation – all ages	Support people to age well/Traffic and road safety	Youth Engagement, opportunities and services	Facilities, activities and employment for young people
Felixstowe Peninsular	Beccles, Bungay, Halesworth and villages	Framlingham, Wickham Market and villages	Aldeburgh, Leiston, Saxmundham and villages
Education – aspirations, ambition and standards	Active and sustainable transport solutions / community transport	Developing opportunities for young people	Education, Opportunities and Aspirations
Social isolation and loneliness	Reduce social isolation and loneliness	Reduce social isolation and loneliness	Reduce social isolation & loneliness particularly carers, older people, and men 40+
Community spaces and physical enhancements	Improve wellbeing and enable people to live healthy lives	Alternative, active and sustainable transport provision	Encourage and enable everyone to be more physically active and healthy

Summary of local context

Local policy demonstrates the focus on improving health and wellbeing throughout the Authority. The Council is keen to achieve this through the development of major infrastructure projects, including a new leisure centre in Felixstowe, which will aim to make Felixstowe a leisure destination. There is also a focus to reduce health inequalities across the Authority. Through a partnership approach, there is a desire to reduce inequalities across all stages of life to ensure residents live healthier, happier lives. This will be achieved through a range of initiatives, from providing all children with the best start possible to improving mental wellbeing for all.

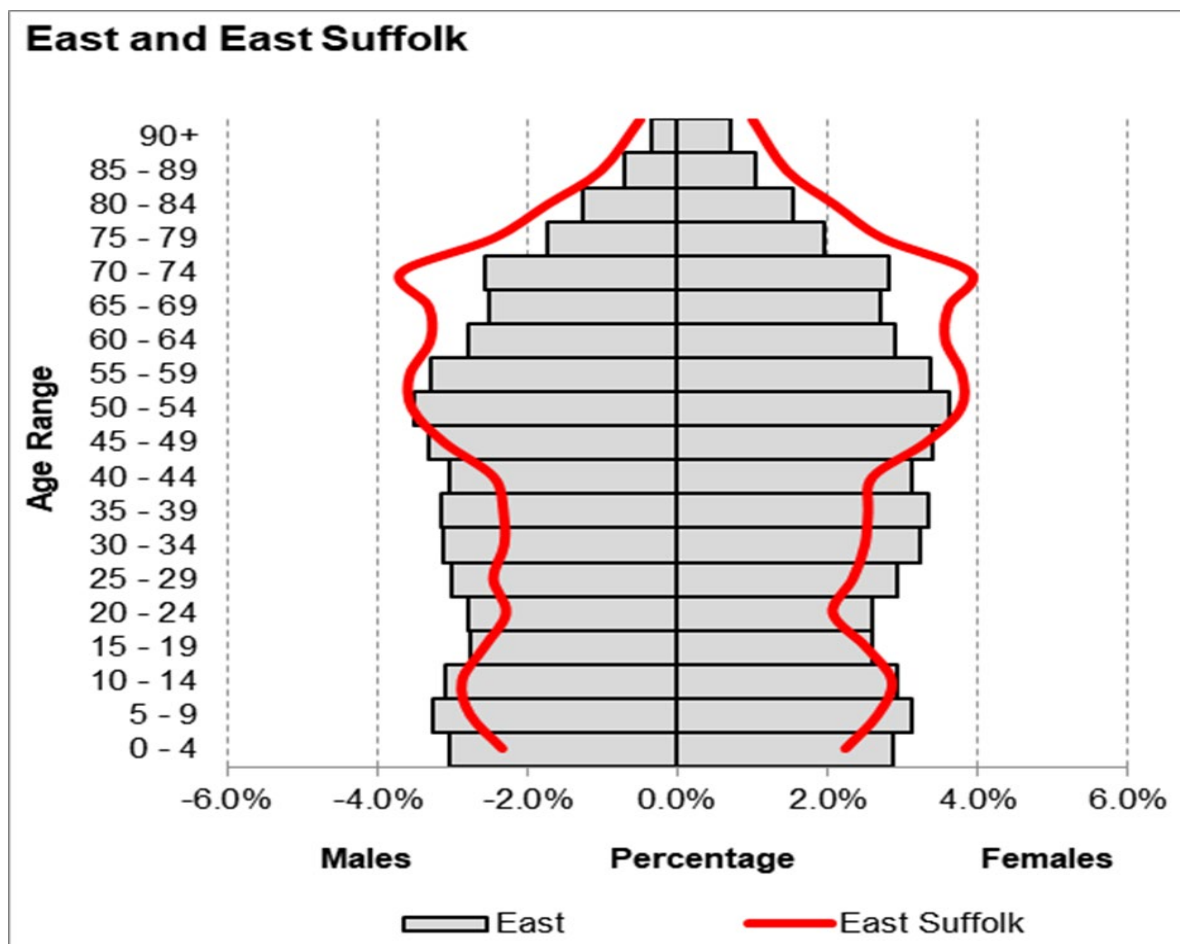
EAST SUFFOLK COUNCIL LEISURE STRATEGY

About East Suffolk

Demographics and socio-economics

The total population in East Suffolk according to 2019 mid-year estimates was 249,461 with slightly more females (128,040) than males (121,421).

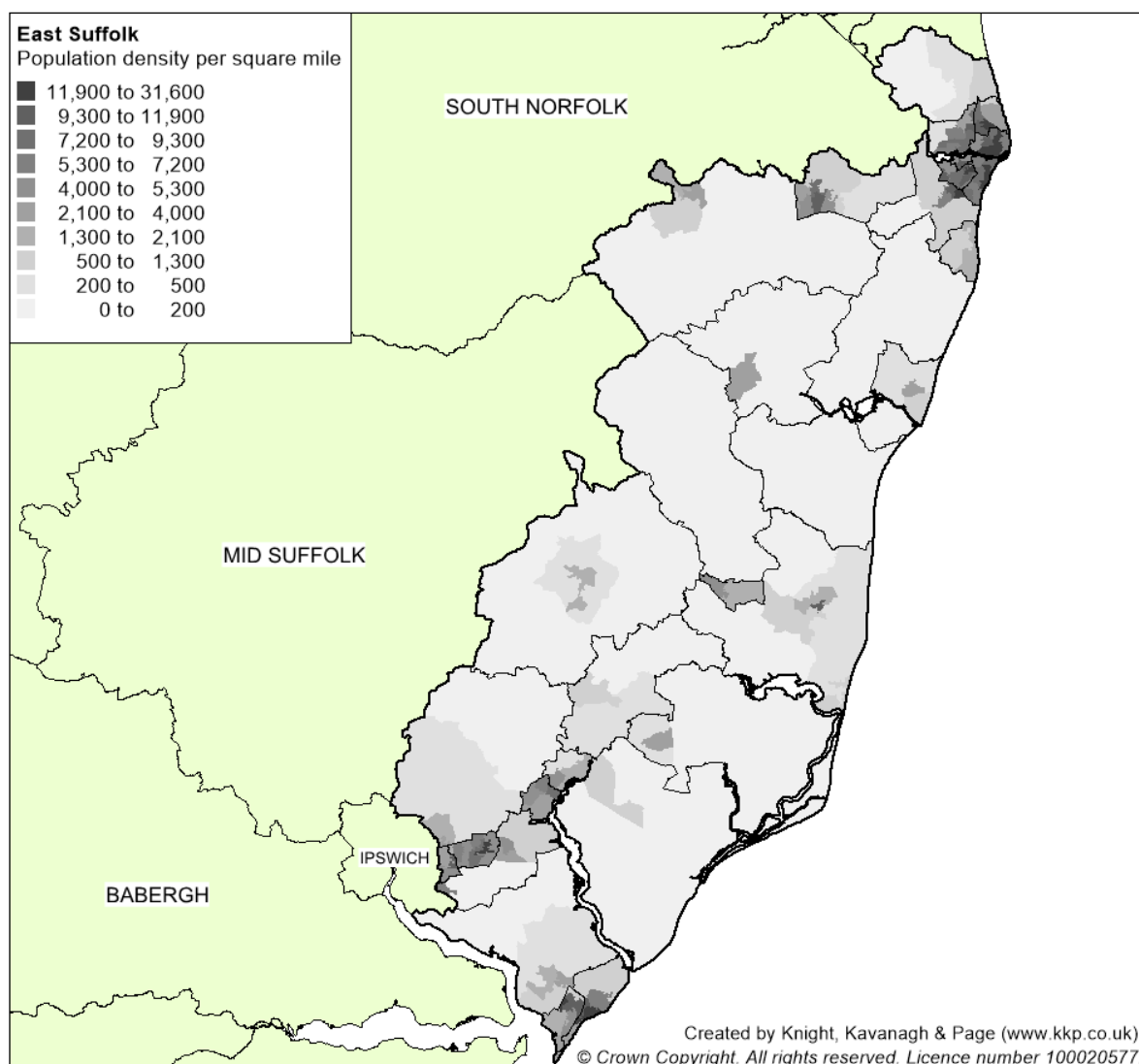
Population, age and gender in East Suffolk



There are proportionately fewer 10–34-year-olds in East Suffolk (24.7%), than there are in the East region (29.1%). However, it has more people in the 60-74 age groups (38.7%) than the region as a whole (33.5%). The resident population is concentrated mainly around its major market towns which include Lowestoft (in the north of the District) and Felixstowe (in the south of the district). The area to the East of Ipswich which includes Kesgrave, also shows a higher population density. The remainder is quite sparsely spread across the district’s rural hinterland.

EAST SUFFOLK COUNCIL LEISURE STRATEGY

Population density 2019 MYE: East Suffolk lower super output areas (LSOA)



Ethnicity (Data source: 2011 census of population, ONS) - East Suffolk's ethnic composition does not reflect that of England as a whole. According to the 2011 Census, 97.1% of the local population classified their ethnicity as White; this is significantly higher than the comparative England rate of 85.4%. The next largest group is Asian, at 1.2% (markedly lower than the national equivalent: 7.8%).¹ This information is subject to change given the proposed new Census due in 2021.

Crime (Data source: 2019 Recorded Crime, Home Office) - During the 12 months to June 2019 the rate for recorded crimes per 1,000 persons in East Suffolk was 70.5; this is markedly lower than the equivalent rate for England and Wales as a whole which was 114.2. The number of recorded crimes in East Suffolk has fallen by 4.4% since June 2018, while by contrast the number for England and Wales has risen by 1.3% over the same period.

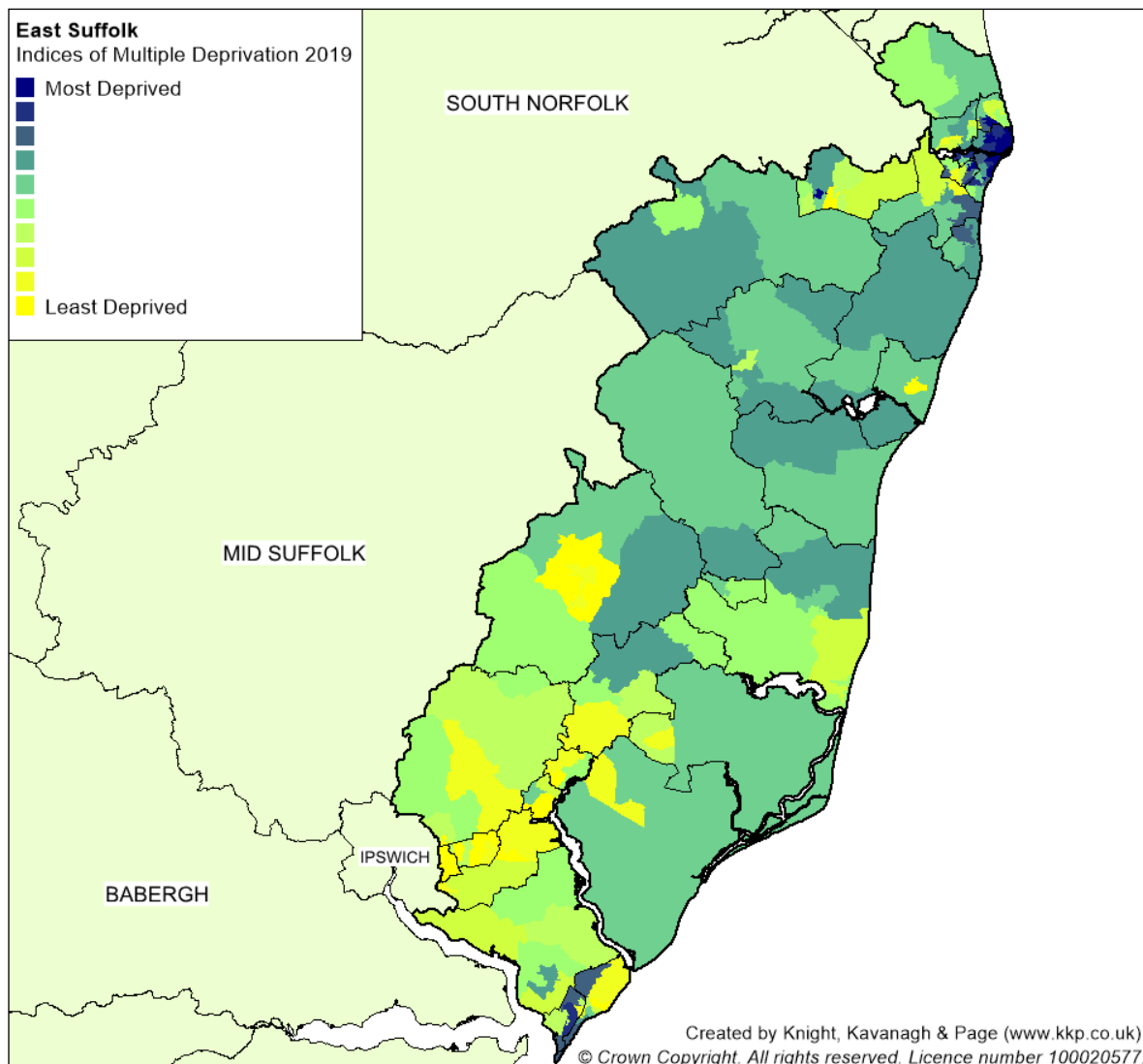
¹ NB this data will shortly be superseded by the 2021 census.

EAST SUFFOLK COUNCIL LEISURE STRATEGY

Income and benefits dependency- The median figure for full-time earnings (2019) in East Suffolk is £28,314; the comparative rate for the East is £30,649 (+8.2%) and for Great Britain is £29,666 (+4.8%). In October 2020 there were 6,860 people in East Suffolk claiming out of work benefits²; this is increase of 81.7% compared to January 2020 (3,775). This is likely to have been affected by the Covid pandemic.

Deprivation (Data source: 2019 indices of deprivation, DCLG)

Index of multiple deprivation for East Suffolk



Deprivation patterns in East Suffolk are much lower than those in the UK as a whole; one in five of the Authority's population (18.6%) live in areas that are in the country's three most deprived cohorts, compared to a national average of c.30%. Conversely, 32.4% live in the three least deprived groupings in the country (again, this compares to a 'norm' of c.30%).

² This includes both Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) and Universal Credit. Universal credit also includes other benefits including employment and support allowance (ESA) and child tax credits.

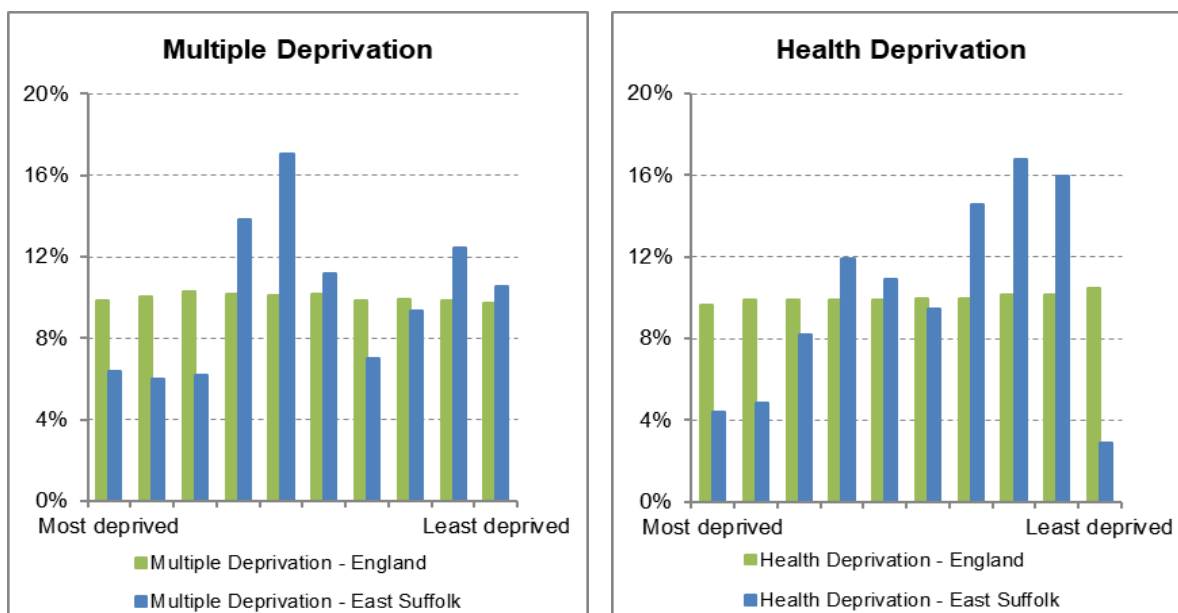
EAST SUFFOLK COUNCIL LEISURE STRATEGY

A similar pattern, to that seen for multiple deprivation, is seen in relation to health. One in six of East Suffolk’s population (17.5%) falls within the areas covered by the three most deprived cohorts whereas 35.7% live in areas in the three least deprived groupings.

Table 2.3: Index of multiple deprivation (IMD) and health deprivation in East Suffolk

IMD cumulative norm		Multiple deprivation			Health deprivation		
		Population in band	Percent of population		Population in band	Percent of population	
Most deprived	10.0	15,416	6.4%	6.4%	10,685	4.4%	4.4%
	20.0	14,594	6.0%	12.4%	11,790	4.9%	9.3%
	30.0	15,034	6.2%	18.6%	19,944	8.2%	17.5%
	40.0	33,603	13.8%	32.4%	28,960	11.9%	29.4%
	50.0	41,337	17.0%	49.4%	26,461	10.9%	40.3%
	60.0	27,179	11.2%	60.6%	22,901	9.4%	49.7%
Least deprived	70.0	17,037	7.0%	67.6%	35,418	14.6%	64.3%
	80.0	22,683	9.3%	77.0%	40,784	16.8%	81.1%
	90.0	30,269	12.5%	89.5%	38,821	16.0%	97.1%
	100.0	25,581	10.5%	100.0%	6,969	2.9%	100.0%

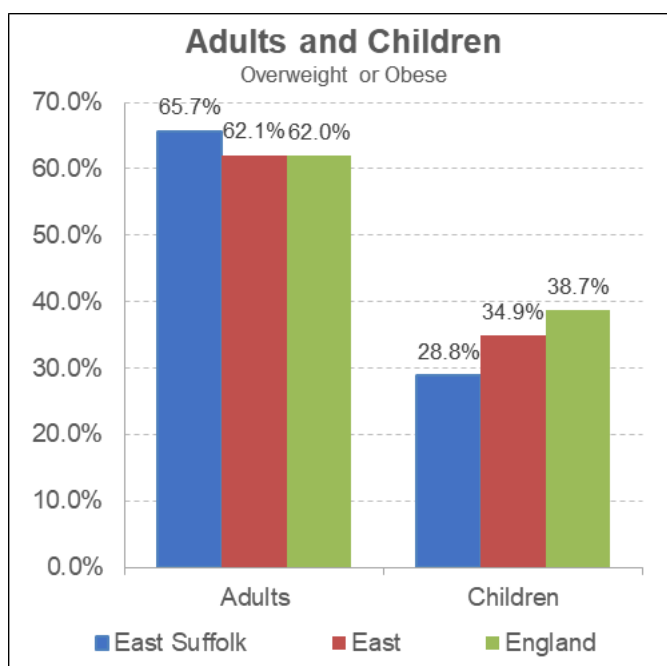
IMD and health domain comparisons – East Suffolk and England.



Weight and obesity

Obesity is widely recognised to be associated with health problems such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer. At a national level, the resulting NHS costs attributable to overweight and obesity are projected to reach £9.7 billion by 2050, with wider costs to society estimated to reach £49.9 billion per year. These factors combine to make the prevention of obesity a major public health challenge.

Adult and child obesity rates East Suffok



Adult obesity rates in East Suffolk are above the national and regional averages.

Conversely, child rates for obesity are lower than the national and regional averages.

In most areas obesity rates increase significantly between the ages of 4 and 11, however, data for this area has been suppressed for reception aged children. In Year 6, just under 16.0% are classed as obese and 12.9% are described as being overweight. In total, by Year 6, over a quarter (28.8%) are either overweight or obese.

Health costs of physical inactivity

The British Heart Foundation (BHF) Promotion Research Group has reviewed the costs of avoidable ill health that it considers are attributable to physical inactivity. Initially produced for the DoH report Be Active Be Healthy (2009) the data has subsequently been reworked for Sport England and updated in 2014/15 by Public Health England.

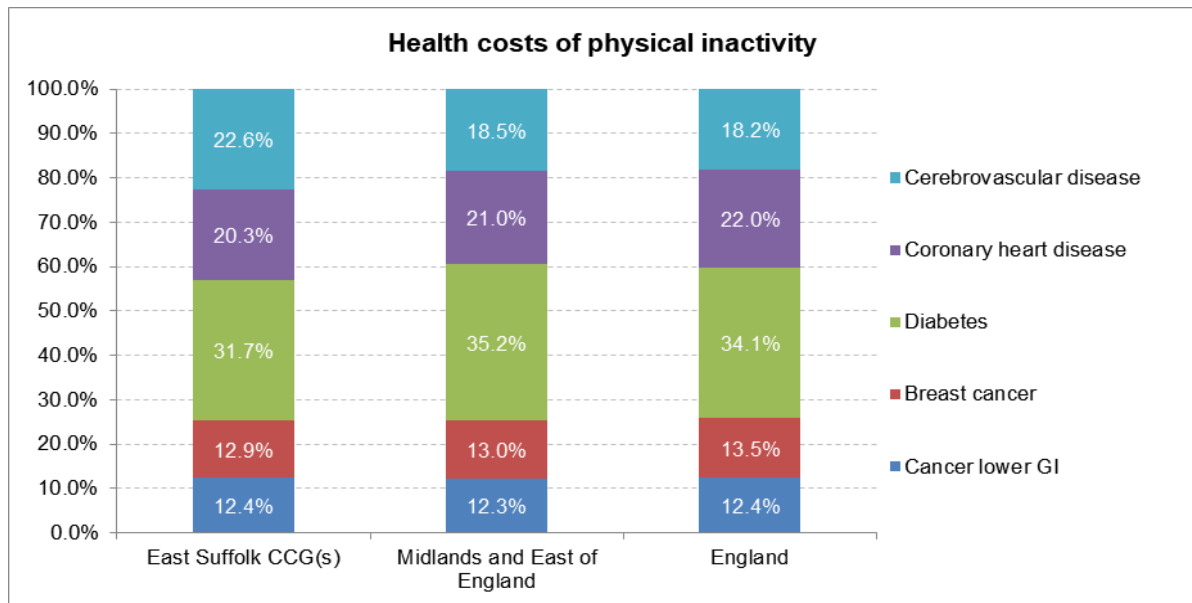
Illnesses that the BHF research relates to include cancers such as bowel cancer, breast cancer, type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease and cerebrovascular disease e.g., stroke. The data indicates a similar breakdown between these illnesses regionally and nationally.

East Suffolk falls within the boundaries of one Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG): NHS Ipswich and East Suffolk CCG.

The total annual cost to the NHS of physical inactivity for the CCGs that East Suffolk falls within is estimated at £5,610,712. When compared to regional and national costs per 100,000, the total costs for the CCGs (£896,568) are 9.7% above the national average (£817,274) and 9.6% above the regional average (£818,185). It should also be noted that in addition to the NHS costs there are also significant costs to industry in terms of days of productivity lost due to back pain etc. These have also been costed in CBI reports and are of similar magnitude to NHS costs.

EAST SUFFOLK COUNCIL LEISURE STRATEGY

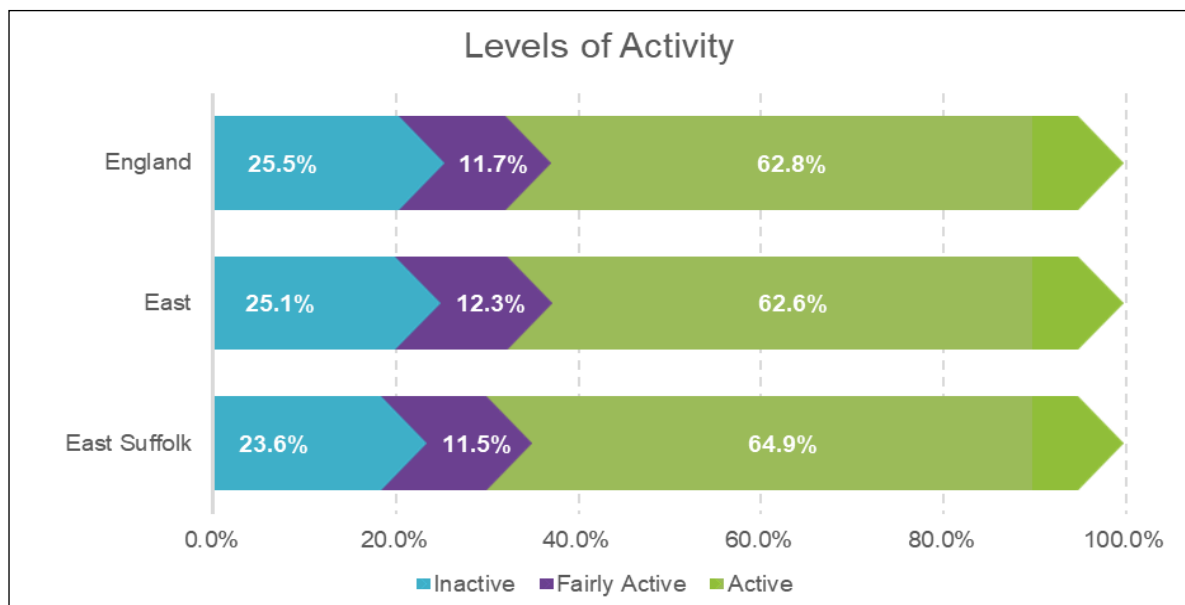
Health costs of physical inactivity in East Suffolk



Active Lives Survey 2019/20

Sport England’s Active Lives Survey (ALS) May 2019/20 assesses 16+ year olds taking part in walking, cycling, fitness, dance and other sporting activity. As identified in Figure 2.11, the percentage of the population considered to be inactive in East Suffolk is 23.6%. This is below regional (25.1%) and national (25.5%) averages. East Suffolk also has more active people (64.9%) than national (62.8%) regional (62.6%) averages.

Figure 2.11: Levels of activity in East Suffolk



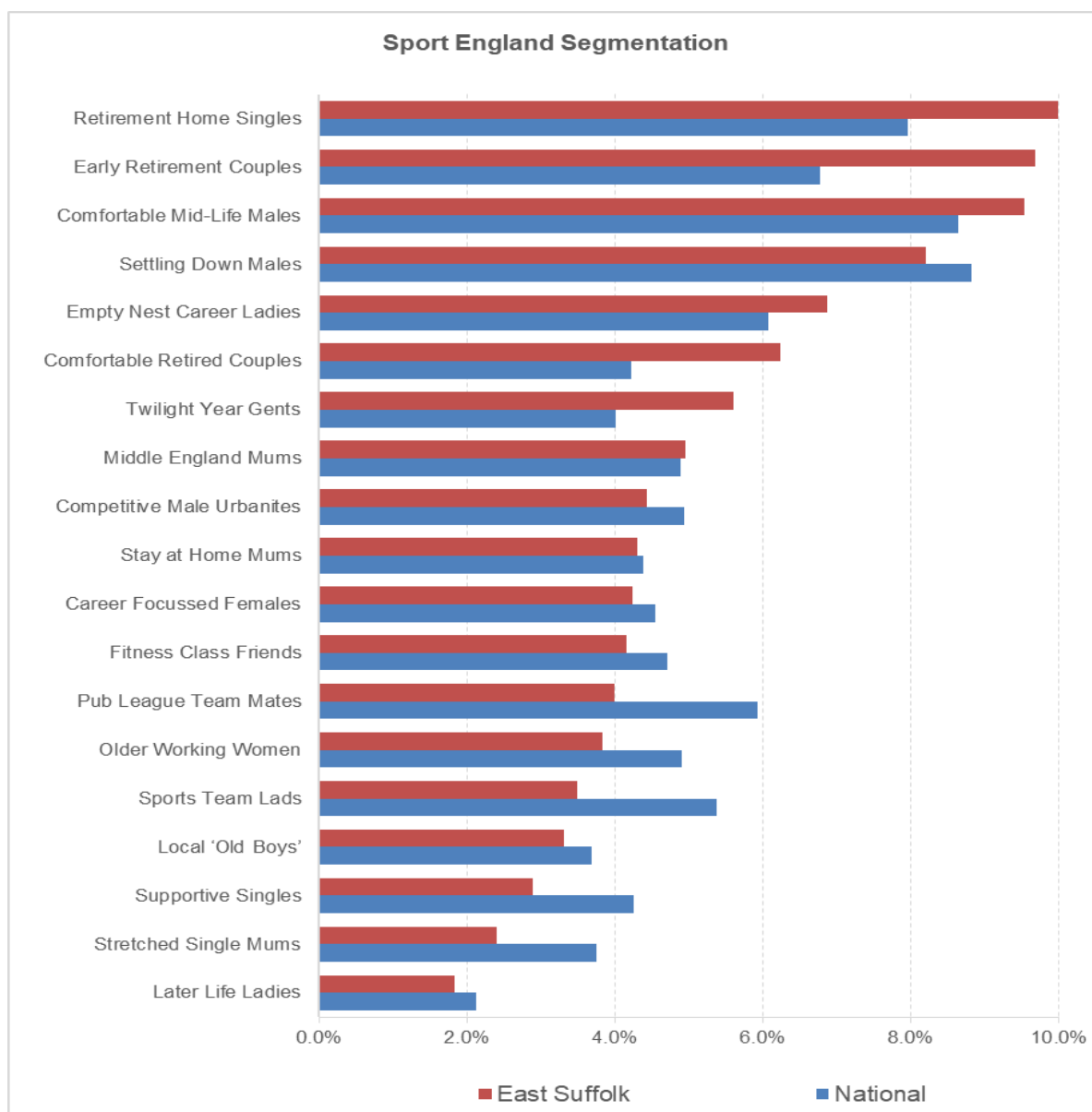
EAST SUFFOLK COUNCIL LEISURE STRATEGY

Sporting segmentation *(Data source: Market segmentation, Sport England)*

Sport England classifies the adult population via a series of 19 market segments providing insight into the sporting behaviours of individuals throughout the country. These cover a wide range of characteristics, from gender and age to the sports that people take part in, other interests, the newspapers that they read etc.

The profile for East Suffolk indicates that 'Retired home singles' is the largest segment of the adult population 10.0% (19,249) compared to a national average of 8.0%. This is closely followed by 'Early Retirement Couples' and 'Comfortable Mid-Life Males'. At the other end of the spectrum, there are fewest 'Later Life Ladies' with just under 2.0% (similar in percentage to the national average), 'Stretched Single Mums' (2.4%) and 'Supportive Singles' (2.9%).

SE market segmentation; East Suffolk compared to England

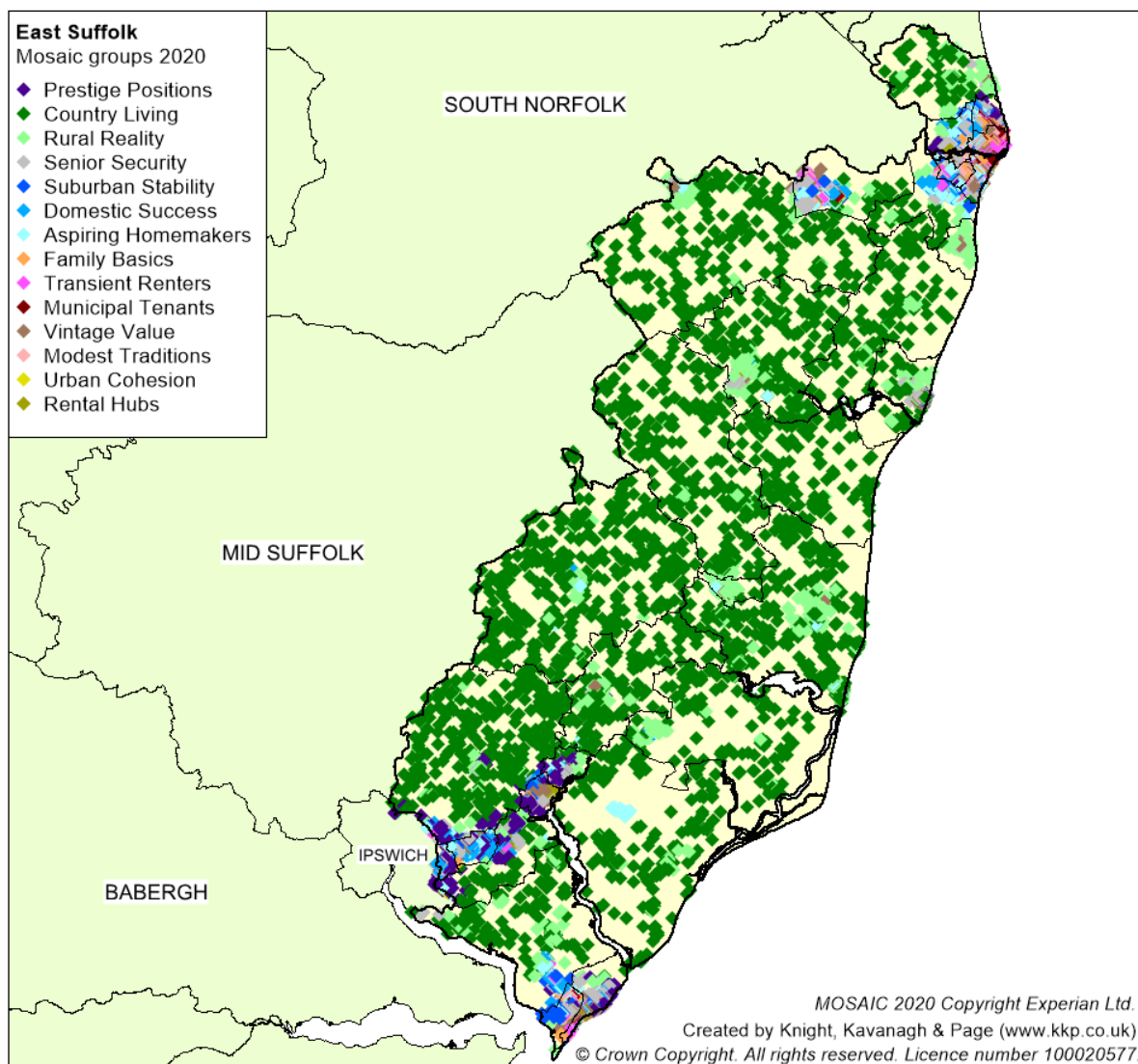


EAST SUFFOLK COUNCIL LEISURE STRATEGY

Mosaic (Data source: 2018 Mosaic analysis, Experian)

Mosaic 2020 is a similar consumer segmentation product and classifies all 28.3 million households into 15 groups, 66 household types and 238 segments. This data is used to paint a picture of UK consumers. The top five Mosaic segments in East Suffolk are shown below. The dominance of these five segments can be seen in as much as they represent almost two thirds (65.4%) of the population compared to a national equivalent rate of just over 4 in 10 (40.5%).

Distribution of Mosaic segments in East Suffolk



The largest segment profiled for East Suffolk is the Rural Reality group, at 18% of the adult population in the area, this is significantly higher than the national rate (6.9%). They are defined as people who live in rural communities and generally own their relatively low cost homes. Their moderate incomes come mostly from employment with local firms or from running their own small business.

EAST SUFFOLK COUNCIL LEISURE STRATEGY

Mosaic – main population segments in East Suffolk

Mosaic group description	East Suffolk		National %
	#	%	
1 - Rural Reality	45,440	18.0%	6.9%
2 - Country Living	41,969	16.6%	7.2%
3 - Senior Security	35,230	14.0%	6.9%
4 - Aspiring Homemakers	22,996	9.1%	10.4%
5 - Domestic Success	19,426	7.7%	9.0%

Dominant Mosaic profiles in East Suffolk

Rural Reality		People who live in rural communities and generally own their relatively low cost homes. Their moderate incomes come mostly from employment with local firms or from running their own small business.
Country Living		Well-off homeowners who live in the countryside often beyond easy commuting reach of major towns and cities. Some people are landowners or farmers, others run small businesses from home, some are retired, and others commute distances to professional jobs.
Senior Security		Elderly singles and couples who are still living independently in comfortable homes that they own. Property equity gives them a reassuring level of financial security. This group includes people who have remained in family homes after their children have left, and those who have chosen to downsize to live among others of similar ages and lifestyles.

Projected population change

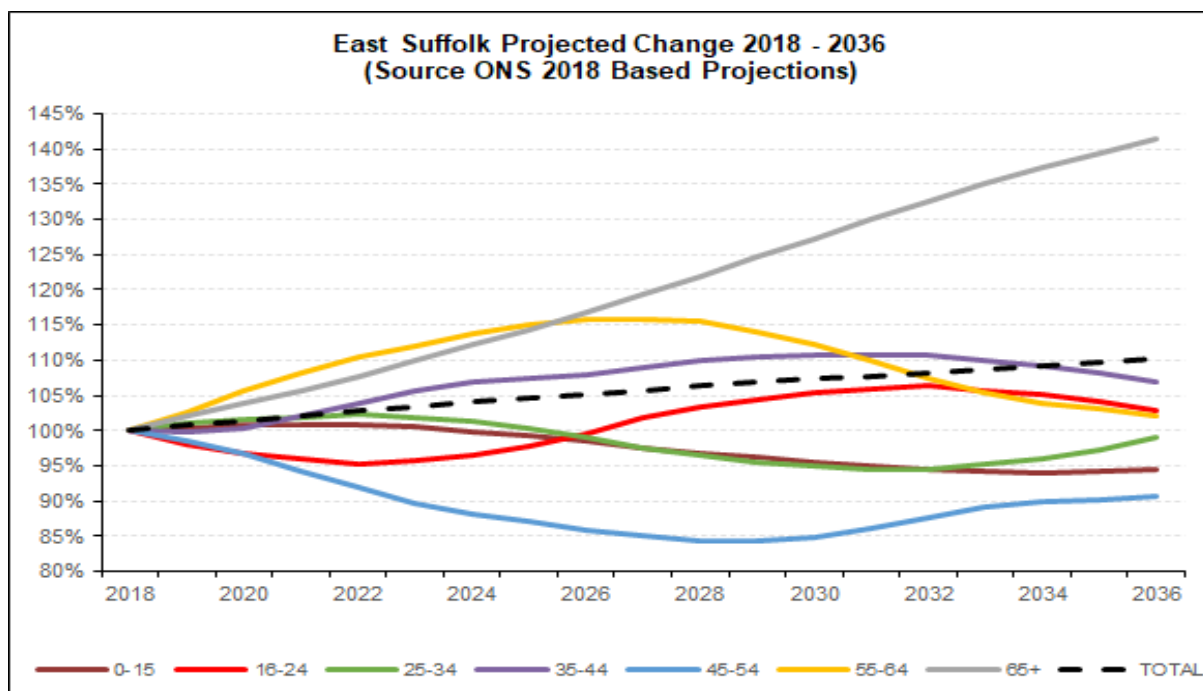
The most recent ONS projections indicate a rise of 10.1% in East Suffolk's population (+25,061) over the 18 years from 2018 to 2036. Over this extended timeframe fluctuations are seen in rise and fall at different points across the majority of age groups.

East Suffolk - ONS projected population (2018 to 2036)

Age (years)	Number			Age structure %			Change 2018 – 2036		
	2018	2027	2036	2018	2027	2036	2018	2027	2036
0-15	42,066	41,050	39,702	16.9%	15.6%	14.5%	100.0%	97.6%	94.4%
16-24	20,914	21,288	21,523	8.4%	8.1%	7.9%	100.0%	101.8%	102.9%
25-34	23,526	22,935	23,284	9.5%	8.7%	8.5%	100.0%	97.5%	99.0%
35-44	24,933	27,159	26,635	10.0%	10.3%	9.7%	100.0%	108.9%	106.8%
45-54	34,821	29,597	31,587	14.0%	11.3%	11.6%	100.0%	85.0%	90.7%
55-64	34,666	40,160	35,374	14.0%	15.3%	12.9%	100.0%	115.8%	102.0%
65+	67,323	80,359	95,205	27.1%	30.6%	34.8%	100.0%	119.4%	141.4%
Total	248,249	262,548	273,310	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	105.8%	110.1%

EAST SUFFOLK COUNCIL LEISURE STRATEGY

East Suffolk projected population change (2018 -2036)



Several key points for East Suffolk are outlined below:

- ▶ One of the most notable points is a decline in the number of 0-15 year olds, falling by 1,016 (2.4%) over the first half of the projection (to 2027).
- ▶ In contrast, there is predicted a small rise in the number of 16-24 year olds, 1.8% in the first period (374) followed by further growth to a whole period total of 2.9% (609).
- ▶ There is a continuous increase in the numbers of persons aged 65+. Numbers will increase by 19.4% (13,036) in the first period continuing to rise to 41.4% (27,882) between 2018 and 2036. While the age group represented 27.1% of East Suffolk's population in 2018 it is projected to be 34.8% of the total by 2036.

Summary of the demographic profile and population projections

East Suffolk's population is expected to increase, with people aged 65+ seeing the largest growth. By 2036, this age group will account for over one third of the population. This is reflected in the Sport England Market segmentation data which highlights 'retired home singles' and 'early retirement couples' as the dominant segments, and it is anticipated that these will grow to reflect the population increase. It is fair to assume that there will be increased demand for sports facilities and physical activity opportunity in areas where housebuilding is planned. The key issue is more to do with how the ageing population chooses to use its leisure time; this may well lead to changes in levels of demand for different activities.

The importance of ensuring that the proportion of the population which is currently active remains so and that more of the presently inactive become active (sustaining and improving the general health of the local population) will become increasingly relevant. Indoor and built facilities, and programmes of activity therein, need to be capable of adapting to any changing demands and needs associated with demographic change.

APPROACH

Open space study

The methodology used in the open space assessment is based on that originally set out in Planning Policy Guidance 17 (PPG17) Companion Guide; Assessing Needs and Opportunities published in September 2002. Whilst PPG17 has been replaced by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), it is still recognised as best practice providing a sound methodology.

The purpose of an Open Space Study is to recognise the role of open space provision as a resource. Open spaces contribute to the health, well-being, cultural heritage, landscape, education, climate change mitigation, biodiversity and movement for people and wildlife. The impact of climate change is a recognised concern. One which open space provision has the ability to help contribute towards tackling through measures such as tree planting, landscaping, re-wilding and creation of wild areas etc. It is therefore vital for local authorities to know what provision currently exists and what the priorities and requirements are for the future.

All open space sites (including provision for children and young people) have been identified, mapped and assessed to evaluate their value and quality. Only sites publicly accessible are included (i.e. private sites or land, which people cannot access, are not included). Each site is classified based on its primary open space purpose, so that each type of space is only counted once. The audit, and the report, utilise the following typologies in accordance with best practice:

1. Parks and gardens
2. Natural and semi-natural greenspace
3. Amenity greenspace
4. Provision for children and young people
5. Allotments
6. Cemeteries/churchyards

The provision of formal outdoor sports is contained within the associated PPOSS. The amount and quality of such provision is not included in the total figures for open space (as a different methodology is prescribed).

The results of the consultation undertaken as part of the open space study are utilised. An online survey was conducted as a key element of the assessment.

The questionnaire consisted of a series of multiple choice and open-ended questions asking respondents their thoughts on topics such as types of open space visited, frequency, quality etc. The online survey was promoted by the Council via social media and other outlets in winter/spring 2021.

A total of 581 responses were received. The findings of the consultations are reviewed and interpreted to further support the report findings.

EAST SUFFOLK COUNCIL LEISURE STRATEGY

Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy

Sport England's guidance details a stepped approach to developing a PPOSS. These steps were followed throughout the process and are separated into five distinct stages:

- ◀ Stage A: Prepare and tailor the approach
- ◀ Stage B: Gather information and views on the supply of and demand for provision
- ◀ Stage C: Assess the supply and demand information and views
- ◀ Stage D: Develop the strategy
- ◀ Stage E: Deliver the strategy and keep it robust and up to date

As per the guidance, and considering the whole East Suffolk Council area, analysis areas have been used to allow for a more localise assessment of provision. For this purpose, the district is split into eight distinct sections, aligned to its Community Partnership areas:

Analysis area	Community Partnership reference
1	Aldeburgh, Leiston, Saxmundham & Villages
2	Beccles, Bungay, Halesworth & Villages
3	Carlton Colville, Kessingland, Southwold & Villages
4	Felixstowe Peninsula
5	Framlingham, Wickham Market & Villages
6	Kesgrave, Rushmere St Andrew, Martlesham, Carlford & Flynn Valley
7	Lowestoft & Northern Parishes
8	Melton, Woodbridge & Deben Peninsula

The following outdoor sports facilities were included within the PPOSS:

- ◀ Football pitches
- ◀ Hockey pitches
- ◀ Bowling greens
- ◀ Croquet lawns
- ◀ Cricket squares
- ◀ Tennis courts
- ◀ Netball courts
- ◀ Petanque terrains
- ◀ Rugby union pitches
- ◀ Third generation turf (3G)
- ◀ Athletics tracks
- ◀ Golf courses

The quality of provision was determined via a combination of non-technical assessments (determined by NGBs) and consultation with stakeholders. This not only relates to the pitch itself but also to the ancillary facilities.

In addition, a variety of consultation methods were used to collate demand information about leagues, clubs, county associations and national/regional governing bodies of sport. Response rates exceeded Sport England's guidance and ensures a robust evidence base:

Sport	Total number	Number responding	Response rate
Football clubs	72	51	73%
<i>Football teams</i>	<i>532</i>	<i>445</i>	<i>84%</i>
Cricket clubs	18	15	83%
Rugby union clubs	8	7	88%
Hockey clubs	4	4	100%
Tennis clubs	25	16	64%
Netball club	9	6	67%
Bowls clubs	48	25	52%
Croquet clubs	2	2	100%

EAST SUFFOLK COUNCIL LEISURE STRATEGY

Information relating to golf, athletics and petanque was primarily acquired through consultation with the relevant NGBs.

Indoor and built sports facilities

Sport England's ANOG guidance (Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide for Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities) details the approach adopted to developing this study. The following steps were followed throughout the process and are separated into four distinct stages:

- ◀ Stage A - Prepare and tailor the approach
- ◀ Stage B - Gather information and views on the supply of and demand for provision
- ◀ Stage C - Assessment, bringing the information together
- ◀ Stage D - Application of the assessment and development of the Strategy

The following indoor and built sports facilities were included within the study:

◀ Sports halls	◀ Swimming pools	◀ Health and fitness
◀ Squash courts	◀ Indoor bowls	◀ Cycling
◀ Gymnastics	◀ Community halls	

The approach to delivering the study included an assessment of the following key elements:

- ◀ Quantity of individual sports facilities across East Suffolk.
- ◀ Quality assessment of each facility and activity area.
- ◀ Accessibility of each facility to the local community (e.g. how far they need to travel).
- ◀ Availability of facilities for community use.

In addition to the above KKP also undertook face to face consultation with a range of local and regional stakeholders including health partners, operators, NGBs, clubs and a wide range of Council officers.

KEY FINDINGS

Open space study

There is a total of over 6,755 hectares of open space in East Suffolk. The largest contributor to provision is natural and semi-natural greenspace (6,264 hectares); accounting for 93% of provision.

Open space typology	Number of sites	Total amount (hectares) ³	Hectares per 1,000 population
Allotments	85	64	0.26
Amenity greenspace	196	229	0.92
Cemeteries/churchyards	175	119	n/a
Natural & semi-natural greenspace	98	6,264	25.11
Park and gardens	22	54	0.22
Provision for children & young people	280	25	0.10
TOTAL	856	6,755	-

For open spaces, provision standards are established and used to determine deficiencies and surpluses. These are set in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility.

Of assessed open space sites, the quality of below half of provision (44%) rates above the thresholds set for quality. However, 56% of sites are of a lower quality which is significant and slightly higher than in comparison to other similar studies undertaken by KKP.

It is understandable for amenity greenspace to have fewer sites scoring above the quality threshold due to the wider range and forms of provision of this type, often with no features, poor appearance or maintenance.

Typology	Quality		Value	
	Low	High	Low	High
Amenity greenspace	108	88	15	181
Provision for children & young people	158	122	24	256
Natural & semi-natural greenspace	55	43	1	97
Park and gardens	14	8	0	22
Totals	335	261	40	556

East Suffolk also has significantly mixed results for play and parks and gardens which are often more relevant to local residents. In most instances this is due to the maintenance, general appearance, pathways and/or a lack of ancillary facilities.

However, the majority of all open spaces (93%) are assessed as being above the threshold for value. This reflects the importance of open space provision and its role offering social, environmental and health benefits.

³ Rounded to the nearest whole number

In summary, 38% of respondents are very satisfied with the availability of open space with 29% are very satisfied with quality of provision. Furthermore, only 1% of people are very dissatisfied with the availability and quality of open space provision.

Therefore, East Suffolk has a key challenge in relation to the amount and quality of open space across the area and the application of the provision standards identifies that there are deficiencies and shortfalls in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility. However, the key focus for the Council is to maintain current open space standards wherever possible and work to improve existing open space for more multi-purpose outcomes.

Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy

The key findings from the assessment of playing pitch and outdoor sports facilities across East Suffolk is summarised as follows:

Football

- ◀ The audit identifies a total of 222 grass football pitches within East Suffolk across 114 sites, with 178 pitches available, at some level, for community use across 83 sites.
- ◀ There are significantly more adult pitches available across East Suffolk when compared to the other pitch sizes.
- ◀ Six sites are identified as having disused football provision, including the former Deben High School site which is to be re-purposed to accommodate cricket.
- ◀ Woodbridge Town FC has security of tenure issues with its lease of Notcutts Park due to expire in 2024; discussions are ongoing regarding a relocation.
- ◀ The large majority of community available pitches are assessed as standard quality, with 141 rated this way compared to 12 assessed as good quality and 25 assessed as poor quality.
- ◀ More clubs report that quality has improved in recent years than those that report poorer quality.
- ◀ Quality of ancillary provision is generally perceived to be good or adequate, with 18 sites serviced by good quality facilities, 51 by standard quality facilities and just 14 by poor quality facilities (or no facilities at all).
- ◀ Reydon Playing Fields, Dip Farm Playing Fields, Eastward Ho and Millennium Sports Ground are larger sites in need of ancillary facility improvements.
- ◀ Through the audit and assessment, 532 teams from within 71 clubs are identified as playing within East Suffolk, consisting of 134 adult, 242 youth and 156 mini teams.
- ◀ There is a general trend of recent growth across East Suffolk with significantly more clubs reporting team increases compared to those reporting decreases.
- ◀ There are currently nine teams within the football pyramid, with Leiston FC and Lowestoft Town FC playing at the highest level (Step 3), whilst three teams play within the women's system.
- ◀ Lowestoft Town FC is currently exploring a relocation and the development of a new stadium which as a minimum will be of Step 2 standard; it reports that this may be viable as part of wider plans from the Council relating to Oakes Farm.
- ◀ A total of 19 clubs state that they have latent demand, with 18 clubs citing training facility issues, 10 clubs reporting grass pitch issues and nine clubs suggesting ancillary facility constraints.
- ◀ Based on population growth, an increase of four adult teams is projected (no increases in youth or mini football are identified due to decreases within the relevant age bands).
- ◀ Nine clubs' report aspirations to increase the number of teams that they provide, with this equating to a predicted growth of 28 teams.

- Actual spare capacity totals 32.5 match equivalent sessions per week across football pitches in East Suffolk, with the majority found on adult pitches.
- A total of 21 pitches across 14 sites are overplayed by a combined total of 27 match equivalent sessions per week.
- There is currently sufficient adult, mini 7v7 and mini 5v5 provision to meet demand, although there are areas where shortfalls need to be addressed.
- There is a shortfall in relation to youth 11v11 and youth 9v9 provision.
- After factoring in future demand, youth 11v11 and youth 9v9 shortfalls are projected to worsen and a shortfall is set to be created on mini 5v5 pitches.

3G pitches

- There are five full size 3G pitches in East Suffolk, all of which are floodlit.
- Four of the full size pitches are available for community use; the pitch at Ipswich Town Football Club's Training Ground is considered to be unavailable as it is reserved entirely for use by a professional club.
- In addition to the full size pitches, there are also five smaller sized outdoor 3G pitches and two smaller sized indoor 3G pitches in the District.
- All of the full size pitches are FA approved to host competitive matches.
- None of the pitches are World Rugby compliant.
- The four community available full size pitches are readily accessible during peak times across weekdays and at weekends.
- The pitch at Barnards Soccer Centre is now 12 years old and is showing considerable wear and tear; it has been assessed as poor quality, with resurfacing recommended.
- The smaller sized pitch at Kirkley & Pakefield Sports Club has also exceeded its recommended lifespan (having been installed in 2008), although this is considered to be less problematic as it has generally received less usage over the years.
- All remaining pitches are considered to be good or standard quality and they have all been installed or resurfaced within the last 10 years.
- The existing 3G provision is reported to be operating at or close to capacity at peak times, with all current activity being football-based.
- With 532 football teams currently playing in East Suffolk, there is a calculated need for 14 full size 3G pitches in the District, meaning a shortfall of 10 pitches is identified (discounting the pitch at Ipswich Town Football Club's Training Ground).
- When accounting for future demand for an additional 32 teams (based on population increases and latent/future demand expressed by clubs), the shortfall increases by one to 11 pitches.
- When assessing 3G pitch need by analysis area there remains a current shortfall of 10 pitches, which when broken down equates to a shortfall of two pitches in areas 4 and 6 and a shortfall of one pitch in areas 1, 2, 3, 5, 7 and 8.
- Taking future demand into consideration, there is an exacerbated shortfall in Area 7, increasing this to two pitches.
- Whilst the number of 3G pitches needed for matches will never outweigh the number of 3G pitches needed for training, maximising the pitches that are in place and that are proposed should be fully supported.
- Although no other sports clubs/users are presently identified as accessing the existing stock of 3G pitches, that it is not to say that there is no demand,
- Given the grass pitch shortfalls identified for rugby union, it is considered that World Rugby compliant provision would be of benefit to the District; this could be achieved in collaboration with reducing shortfalls for football, or exclusively if this was adjudged to be sustainable.
- Priority should be placed on the creation of new 3G pitches.

- ◀ In addition, it is important to sustain the current pitch stock to ensure that the existing shortfalls are not exacerbated, particularly at Barnards Soccer Centre given that its pitch has reached the end of its lifespan.

Cricket

- ◀ In total, there are 33 grass cricket squares in East Suffolk located across 28 sites, with 28 squares available for community use.
- ◀ There are NTPs accompanying grass wicket squares at 11 sites and there are standalone NTPs at seven sites.
- ◀ Of the clubs with lease arrangements in place, Yoxford CC reports a particular issue in that the agreement for its site, which is acquired from a private landowner, expires in 2023.
- ◀ Blundeston & Somerleyton CC has only nine years remaining on its lease of Somerleyton Playing Field, from Somerleyton Community Association, whereas Felixstowe & Corinthians CC has only 11 years remaining on its lease of the Town Ground, from the Council.
- ◀ The audit of community available grass wicket cricket squares found 16 to be good quality and the remaining 12 to be standard quality; none are assessed as poor.
- ◀ The NTPs servicing the squares at Saxmundham Sports Club, the Town Ground and Yoxford Cricket Club are considered to be poor quality, as is the standalone NTP at Kesgrave High School.
- ◀ Blundeston & Somerleyton, BT Wadringfield and Lowestoft Town cricket clubs are serviced by poor quality ancillary provision.
- ◀ There are 18 clubs in East Suffolk which collectively provide 38 senior men's, eight senior women's and 47 junior teams.
- ◀ Five clubs in East Suffolk form part of the All Stars initiative, whilst three clubs are running Dynamo's sessions.
- ◀ Six clubs field women's softball teams.
- ◀ No future demand is predicted via population growth, although eight indicate aspirations to increase levels of participation, equating to four senior men's, three senior women's and nine junior teams.
- ◀ The Suffolk Cricket Board expects three additional senior women's teams to be fielded within the next three years in addition to increases expressed by clubs.
- ◀ Three clubs report that senior demand has increased over the previous three years, whilst four report a decrease.
- ◀ Four clubs report an increase in junior demand, with only Southwold CC reporting a reduction.
- ◀ There are 21 squares that show potential spare capacity on grass wickets although only 11 of these have actual spare capacity for senior demand on Saturday's, whilst 12 have actual spare capacity on Sunday's.
- ◀ A total of 13 squares have actual spare capacity during midweek for junior cricket.
- ◀ Five squares are overplayed, with total overplay equating to 51 match equivalent sessions.
- ◀ For senior cricket, significant overall spare capacity is identified, although shortfalls are evident in Area 4 and Area 5.
- ◀ For junior cricket, overall spare capacity exists both currently and in the future; however, a worsening shortfall is identified in Area 5.

Rugby union

- ◀ There are 48 rugby union pitches in East Suffolk across 27 sites, which broken down equates to 40 senior and eight junior pitches.
- ◀ Of the pitches, 38 are available for community use across 21 sites.
- ◀ Of the community available pitches, 11 are assessed as good quality, 19 are assessed as standard and eight are assessed as poor.
- ◀ Lowestoft & Yarmouth, Aldeburgh, Southwold, Felixstowe, Ipswich and Woodbridge rugby clubs all express a need for their ancillary provision to be improved/enhanced.
- ◀ Lowestoft & Yarmouth RUFC aspires to relocate its demand and is hoping to lodge a planning application in 2022 to enable this, with its existing site allocated for housing.
- ◀ A planning application has been submitted at Halesworth Campus Sports Complex that proposes the loss of a grassed area that is used by Southwold RUFC.
- ◀ With cricket provision that previously shared Coronation Sports Ground relocating to the former Deben High School site, space has been freed up for rugby and will allow the Felixstowe RUFC to re-configure the pitches and provide floodlighting.
- ◀ Woodbridge RUFC has recently secured additional land that it is looking to develop for its mini demand and wheelchair rugby.
- ◀ The only club considered to have unsecure tenure is Southwold RUFC as its lease of Southwold Common has expired, although the Club reports that discussions are ongoing regarding a long-term extension.
- ◀ There are eight rugby union clubs based in East Suffolk providing a total of 102 teams, which when broken down equates to 22 senior, 38 junior and 42 mini teams.
- ◀ Beccles, Lowestoft & Yarmouth, Woodbridge, Ipswich YM and Ipswich rugby clubs all train on match pitches that are accompanied by floodlighting, whilst Aldeburgh RUFC and Felixstowe RUFC also use pitches via portable lighting.
- ◀ Both Aldeburgh RUFC and Felixstowe RUFC are exploring the installation of permanent floodlighting to better accommodate training demand, whereas Ipswich RUFC and Lowestoft & Yarmouth RUFC report that they need additional floodlights due to existing capacity issues.
- ◀ No future demand is predicted via population growth, whilst six of the clubs have growth aspirations amounting to a potential increase of six senior and 14 junior teams.
- ◀ Overall, there is a current shortfall of 27 match equivalent sessions on rugby union pitches, with only Area 1 and Area 5 having no capacity issues.
- ◀ When considering future demand, the shortfall increases to 37 match equivalent sessions.
- ◀ The largest shortfalls are noted in Area 2 and Area 7, both of which have a current deficit of 7.5 match equivalent sessions and a future deficit of 9.5 match equivalent sessions.
- ◀ Actual spare capacity is evident on only four pitches in the District and amounts to four match equivalent sessions.
- ◀ There are 13 pitches across seven sites that are overplayed by a total of 31 match equivalent sessions per week.

Hockey

- ◀ The audit identifies 10 full size hockey suitable AGPs in East Suffolk, nine of which are available for community use (the pitch at Rock Barracks is not).
- ◀ Eight of the pitches are floodlit (one of the pitches at Ipswich School Sports Centre is not).
- ◀ There are also four smaller sized pitches provided; three of these are available to the community and two are floodlit.

- ◀ East Coast HC is without security of tenure at East Point Academy, as is Framlingham HC at Framlingham College.
- ◀ Of the full size pitches, four are assessed as good quality, three pitches are standard quality and two as poor quality (access could not be gained to Rock Barracks).
- ◀ The pitch at Felixstowe School and the older pitch at Framlingham College are assessed as poor as both are beyond their recommended lifespan and signs of wear and tear on the surface are prevalent.
- ◀ Floodlighting is also of concern at Felixstowe School, with the current provision considered to be unsafe.
- ◀ Whilst the pitch at East Point Academy is assessed as standard quality, it too has exceeded its recommended lifespan.
- ◀ Felixstowe HC has issues in relation to the ancillary facilities at Felixstowe School, where access has recently been denied.
- ◀ The four hockey clubs in East Suffolk consist of 30 teams, which as a breakdown consists of ten senior men's, 12 senior women's and 14 junior teams as well as six other team varieties.
- ◀ East Coast HC has an aspiration to develop its own facility and has built up a small fund to contribute towards this; it is aware of wider plans around Oakes Farm and is interested in potentially being part of the development.
- ◀ Beccles HC was previously based in Beccles until 2006 but had to relocate when league stipulations meant that an AGP had to be accessed; it now plays at Langley School in South Norfolk but states that this was detrimental to its demand.
- ◀ All five hockey clubs have plans to increase their membership, with growth across the clubs equating to three senior men's and six senior women's teams.
- ◀ No England Hockey initiatives are currently identified as taking place in East Suffolk, although Ipswich East Suffolk HC reports an intention to develop its informal programme moving forward.
- ◀ As seven community available full size pitches are currently in use by hockey clubs, these require protection (or replacement) as each is serving a specific purpose.
- ◀ Quality should be sustained or improved across the sites to ensure that they remain useable for the long-term future, whilst security of tenure issues also need to be addressed in relation to East Coast HC and Framlingham HC.
- ◀ There may also be a requirement to find a solution to the exported demand expressed by Beccles HC given its aspiration to relocate to East Suffolk.

Tennis

- ◀ There is a total of 230 tennis courts identified in East Suffolk across 70 sites, with 163 courts categorised as being available for community use at 51 sites.
- ◀ The majority of courts are operated by schools, although only 36% of these are available for community use.
- ◀ The large majority of courts have a macadam surface, with 177 being of this type, 42 having an artificial surface and the remaining 11 have a grass surface.
- ◀ In total, 108 of the 230 tennis courts are serviced by floodlights, representing 48% of the provision, which is a relatively high amount when compared to other local authorities.
- ◀ Of the courts, 49 are assessed as good quality, 120 as standard quality and 61 as poor quality.
- ◀ Of particular concern are the poor quality courts at Charsfield Recreation Ground, Denes Oval, Grundisburgh Playing Field and Wenhaston Recreation Ground as these are all in regular use by clubs.

- ◀ A number of clubs rate the quality of their clubhouse and/or changing rooms as being poor quality, with this applying to Aldeburgh, Saxmundham, Southwold & District, Ufford, Wenhaston, Wickham Market and Wrentham tennis clubs.
- ◀ There are 25 tennis clubs in East Suffolk; at the 16 clubs where membership is known, there are 1,928 members (1,307 senior and 681 junior) and the average membership is 120.5.
- ◀ Seven clubs report that senior membership has increased over recent years whilst eight report that junior membership has increased; only four clubs report decreases.
- ◀ A total of 11 clubs report future growth aspirations, with total future demand amounting to 380 potential additional members (200 senior and 180 junior).
- ◀ In addition, Sport England's Segmentation Tool identifies latent demand of 4,399 people within East Suffolk.
- ◀ Away from clubs, it is considered that all local authority courts available for community use in East Suffolk have spare capacity for a growth in demand, although this is difficult to quantify as use is not recorded due to the open access nature of many sites.
- ◀ The LTA has developed a package of support for local authorities and clubs to grow the use of tennis courts, in turn making them more sustainable and financially viable.
- ◀ Out of the education providers, only Ipswich School Sports Centre reports any regular demand from the community for tennis.
- ◀ Precedence should be placed on improving quality to an adequate standard for informal play, particularly at publicly available sites hosting multiple courts.
- ◀ Five clubs have current capacity issues, with these being Woodbridge, Grundisburgh, Snape, Ufford and Southwold & District tennis clubs.
- ◀ When accounting for future demand, a shortfall could also be created at Saxmundham Sports Club based on the growth aspirations of Saxmundham TC.
- ◀ All remaining clubs have spare capacity at the sites that they use, suggesting that there is an overall sufficient number of courts in the District, albeit solutions are required to better accommodate the clubs with capacity issues.

Netball

- ◀ There is a large supply of outdoor netball courts across East Suffolk, with 101 identified across 47 sites; however, only 46 courts at 19 sites are available for community use.
- ◀ Most outdoor netball courts in East Suffolk are operated by schools, with 86 of the 101 courts falling under this management type.
- ◀ The large majority of outdoor netball courts in East Suffolk have a macadam surface, with 82 being of this type; the remaining 19 courts all have an artificial surface.
- ◀ All but 18 of the courts are over marked by tennis provision.
- ◀ Only 39 of the courts are serviced by floodlighting, with 32 of these being available for community use.
- ◀ Of the courts, 10 are assessed as good quality, 68 as standard quality and 23 as poor quality.
- ◀ Eight netball clubs have been identified as being based in East Suffolk.
- ◀ All eight clubs use outdoor courts for some form of activity, with provision at Ipswich School Sports Centre, Brackenbury Sports Centre, Framlingham College, Framlingham College Prep School and Kesgrave High School accessed.
- ◀ Both Ipswich Ladies Netball Club and Atlas Netball Club export some demand outside of East due to a lack of suitable provision within the District, whilst the Lowestoft Netball League is also exported as it uses a site in Great Yarmouth as a central venue.
- ◀ Beccles Bluebirds Netball Club reports latent demand in that it suggests that it would be able to accommodate more members if it had access to an increased number of better quality courts.

- ◀ Ipswich Ladies, Beccles Bluebirds and Teachers Pets netball clubs all report aspirations to grow their number of members and teams, whereas remaining clubs report that priority is on retaining participation levels.
- ◀ Back to Netball and Walking Netball have been ran in East Suffolk, with additional sessions likely to be held in the future.
- ◀ Netball Now sessions are held at Inspire Suffolk Colville House.
- ◀ With eight clubs and numerous leagues servicing the East Suffolk area, there is relatively high demand for netball in East Suffolk and particularly for access to outdoor courts.
- ◀ The quantity of courts does not seem to be a problem, with many unused, but rather the quality of them in addition to accessibility issues.
- ◀ Priority should therefore be placed on improving the existing stock of courts, with a focus on sites that are already in use for netball or where netball demand would exist if there was a better offer (such as in Lowestoft).
- ◀ Focus should also be placed on supporting the various initiatives that are championed by England Netball and ensuring such programmes have suitable provision from which to be ran from.

Bowls

- ◀ There are 48 flat green bowling greens in East Suffolk provided across the same number of sites.
- ◀ In addition, there are disused greens at St Audry's Bowling Club, Corton Bowling Club and Lound Bowling Club.
- ◀ A planning application has been submitted that proposes the loss of the playing field, including the bowling green, at Suffolk Constabulary Ground to enable the creation of a 300-dwelling housing development.
- ◀ Security of tenure concerns exist for Bealings, Easton, Sweffling and Wrentham bowls clubs given the private nature of their sites, whereas Felixstowe & Walton BC also has unsecure tenure as the future of its green is very much down to Felixstowe Conservative Club.
- ◀ Overall, 32 greens are assessed as good quality and 16 are assessed as standard; none are poor quality.
- ◀ Nine clubs report that quality has improved over the last year, whilst only four clubs report worsening quality.
- ◀ Otley BC and Sweffling BC are serviced by poor quality ancillary facilities, whereas Bredfield, Brampton & District, Martlesham, Red Triangle and Saxmundham bowls clubs all report an intention to improve their provision.
- ◀ There are 48 clubs using bowling greens in East Suffolk; where membership is known, across 25 clubs, there are 677 senior male, 233 senior female and four junior members.
- ◀ The average membership across the clubs is 37.
- ◀ Only 13 of the 48 clubs are affiliated to Bowls England, with the remaining 25 being unaffiliated.
- ◀ In correlation to a national trend of declining membership, 12 clubs report a reduction in participation over recent years, whereas none report an increase.
- ◀ Due to a predicted increase in persons aged 65 and over (to 2036), demand is likely to increase for greens over the coming years.
- ◀ A total of 23 clubs express future demand, equating to potential growth of 172 senior members and 60 junior members.
- ◀ All clubs report that existing membership can be accommodated on the current level of provision and that no potential members are being turned away; however, Felixstowe BC indicates that it requires an additional green to enable it to increase its demand.

- ◀ Three clubs are currently operating above the recommended capacity threshold for a bowling green (Felixstowe BC, Framlingham Castle BC and Woodbridge BC).
- ◀ Five clubs (Leiston Town BC, Mettingham BC, Red Triangle BC, Saxmundham BC and Sutton BC) are operating below the level of membership required to ensure that the greens that they use are sustainable.
- ◀ All remaining clubs are considered to be adequately catered for and sustainable; with no greens being unused (with the exception of disused provision), this means that no provision can be deemed surplus to requirements at this stage.

Pétanque terrains

- ◀ Across East Suffolk, pétanque is identified as being played at 21 different venues.
- ◀ The terrain at Brackenbury Sports Centre is set to be lost as part of wider plans to develop the site for housing and a new Felixstowe Leisure Centre developed.
- ◀ Three new terrains are to be developed along the Felixstowe Sea Front, with the provision set to be in place before the end of 2021.
- ◀ As most of the pétanque terrains are provided at public houses, security of tenure is an issue for many users.
- ◀ The nature of the sport means that surface quality is not considered overly important when compared to similar sports such as bowls, with balls being thrown towards the jack, rather than rolled.
- ◀ The Suffolk Coastal Pétanque Alliance runs both a Summer League and a Winter League for pétanque teams as well as an annual Singles League.
- ◀ Of the 29 teams competing in the 2020 Winter League, 23 are based in East Suffolk.
- ◀ Each site is in use by at least one team, whilst seven venues are in use by multiple teams.
- ◀ The Suffolk Coastal Pétanque Alliance does not have a capacity within its league structures, with any future growth just resulting in more divisions being created.
- ◀ The existing supply in East Suffolk is considered sufficient to meet demand.
- ◀ Nevertheless, something that could be explored is the creation of suitable provision at more secure venues, such as at council sites and at sport clubs.

Croquet lawns

- ◀ Two croquet lawns are provided at Fynn Valley Golf Club (Area 6) for Ipswich Croquet Club, whilst one is provided at Ogilvie Pavilion Sports Ground (Area 1 for Thorpeness Croquet Club).
- ◀ All three lawns are assessed as good quality, with the respective club users reporting that they are well maintained.
- ◀ Both Ipswich Croquet Club and Thorpeness Croquet Club have their own clubhouses, with the latter reporting that improvements are planned.
- ◀ Ipswich Croquet Club is planning to relocate its demand to Trinity Park, where two lawns are also provided following previous bowls use.
- ◀ There are two croquet clubs based in East Suffolk; Ipswich Croquet Club and Thorpeness Croquet Club.
- ◀ Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, Thorpeness Croquet Club catered for 28 playing members before suspending subscriptions when play was no longer allowed, whilst Ipswich Croquet Club has 46 members.
- ◀ Ipswich Croquet Club was previously based in Ipswich and considers itself to be an Ipswich-based club, although it is satisfied in East Suffolk.

EAST SUFFOLK COUNCIL LEISURE STRATEGY

- ◀ Neither club report latent or unmet demand; however, given its location and the size of East Suffolk, it is reasonable to assume that some potential demand is not being catered for, particularly in central and northern parts of the District.
- ◀ Thorpeness Croquet Club is adequately provided for via the lawn at Ogilvie Pavilion Sports Ground; however, demand should be monitored, given the infancy of the Club.
- ◀ Supply is also sufficient to meet demand from Ipswich Croquet Club and this is likely to remain the case for the foreseeable future given how established the Club is.
- ◀ Demand should be further explored in other areas of East Suffolk to better understand if there is a need for any additional provision to be established elsewhere.

Athletics

- ◀ There are no purpose-built athletics track provided in East Suffolk, with the nearest facilities being located in Ipswich at Northgate Sports Centre and in Great Yarmouth at Wellesley Recreation Ground.
- ◀ Numerous trim trails are provided across the District to support running activity, such as at Ufford Park in Woodbridge, Martlesham Heath in Martlesham and Buregate Road in Felixstowe.
- ◀ Nine clubs have been identified that have a focus on athletics and/or running activity.
- ◀ The clubs vary in size, with the likes of Waveney Valley Athletics Club and Beccles & Bungay Harriers Athletics Club catering for a high number of members.
- ◀ Many of the clubs also organise annual running events, such as the Framlingham 10km, the Saxon 5-mile and the Coastal 10-mile.
- ◀ Five different Park Run events are held weekly across East Suffolk, with an average of 198.9 runners taking part, whilst an additional event is proposed at Rendlesham Forest.
- ◀ Whilst no data is available in relation to take up of the Couch to 5k initiative in East Suffolk, anecdotal evidence suggests that it is popular and also growing in popularity.
- ◀ There are currently no Run Together groups in East Suffolk, with Rushmere Community Runners providing the nearest service, in Ipswich.
- ◀ Demand for club-based activity and the various initiatives is likely to increase in the future, although to what extent is difficult to quantify.
- ◀ There is high demand for athletics and particularly running in East Suffolk; priority should therefore be placed on continuing to support activity, with a focus on retaining and increasing participation.
- ◀ Opportunities should also be explored to establish purpose-built facilities, linked to England Athletics' current priorities, such as through the development of floodlit mini tracks and/or endurance loops at multi-sport sites.

Golf

- ◀ There are currently 20 golf sites in East Suffolk.
- ◀ Two additional golfing venues were also previously provided, known as Dip Farm Golf Course and High Lodge Darsham Golf Course; however, these closed in 2018 and 2021, respectively.
- ◀ All 20 current golf sites provide at least one standard hole course, with a total of 13 18-hole and 12 9-hole courses supplied.
- ◀ The course at Kingfishers at Cretingham has recently been reduced from 18 holes to nine holes following a change in ownership, whilst the course at Waldringfield Golf Club is presently undergoing a major redevelopment.
- ◀ Only two sites provide a Par 3 course, with these found at Fynn Valley Golf Club and Rookery Park Golf Club in addition to their standard hole courses; both encompass nine holes.

- ◀ There are 111 driving range bays provided across seven of the venues, with six of these available for the general public to use on a pay and play basis (the facility at Felixstowe Ferry Golf Club is generally reserved for members and green fee users).
- ◀ There are no municipal courses following the closure of Dip Farm Golf Course, with the remaining sites equally split between members clubs and proprietary facilities.
- ◀ Provision at Framlingham College and Orwell Park School operates significantly differently to the remaining provision, with both being school sites and inaccessible to the wider public.
- ◀ The average cost of membership is lower than the national average suggesting an overall cheaper price point than the national rate, although costs are higher at Woodbridge, Thorpeness and Ipswich golf clubs as these are high end facilities.
- ◀ Green fees are available at 17 of the sites, with costs ranging significantly from as little as £5 at Beccles Golf Club to up to £125 at Aldeburgh Golf Club.
- ◀ In terms of quality, it is relatively good across the District with no significant issues identified and with nearly all sites having dedicated green keeping staff which provide maintenance regimes that operate all-year round.
- ◀ Ancillary facilities are also for the most part good, with Fynn Valley Golf Club and Kingfishers at Cretingham in particular well provided for having had new clubhouses built in 2018 and 2019, respectively.
- ◀ Felixstowe Ferry Golf Club has planning permission to develop a new clubhouse, with building work expected to start soon.
- ◀ Overall demand across East Suffolk is seemingly high, with 6,256 members attached to the clubs; however, this means that the average membership (417 members per facility) is actually below the national average (484 members).
- ◀ Membership is above the national average at six sites which are all generally at the higher end of the golfing market within the District.
- ◀ Against a national trend of increasing membership, overall membership in East Suffolk has marginally declined over recent years, with 6,353 members attached to the clubs in 2015 compared to 6,256 currently.
- ◀ Seven clubs have increased their membership since 2015 compared to nine that have seen a reduction.
- ◀ England Golf has an aim to increase membership of clubs nationally by 1.07%, which would represent an increase of 67 members in East Suffolk.
- ◀ England Golf's mapping tool identifies a significant amount of potential demand, with Priory Park Golf Course and Ipswich Golf Club shown to have a particularly high population base.
- ◀ East Suffolk is currently well provided for in relation to golf provision, with a large quantity and a variety of facilities provided.
- ◀ Aligned with the above, demand for golf provision in East Suffolk is also reasonably high, with membership numbers generally strong against the national average.
- ◀ There is likely to be a need for facilities to be retained as each site will cater for a specific type of demand and market that cannot necessarily be accommodated elsewhere in the locality.

Summary

The existing position for all sports is either that demand is being met or that there is a shortfall, whereas the future position shows the exacerbation of current shortfalls and the creation of shortfalls for some sports and in some areas where demand is currently being met. The shortfalls identified are for youth 11v11, youth 9v9 and mini 5v5 football pitches, senior rugby union pitches, tennis courts, bowling greens and purpose-built athletics facilities.

Where demand is being met, this does not equate to a surplus of provision, with any spare capacity instead considered as a solution to overcoming shortfalls. As such, there is a clear need to protect all existing provision until all demand is met, or there is a requirement to replace provision to an equal or better quantity and quality before it is lost, in line with Sport England's Playing Fields Policy. In addition, there remain some area and site specific issues that need resolving despite no overall capacity issues, such as those relating to quality and security of tenure.

Where shortfalls are present, for the most part, they can be met by better utilising current provision, such as through improving quality, installing additional floodlighting, improving ancillary facilities and enabling access to existing unused provision, such as at unavailable school sites. Another example of how to develop existing provision to overcome shortfalls is through pitch re-configuration (or re-designation).

Notwithstanding the above, there is a shortfall of 3G pitches and entry level athletics facilities that can only be met through increased provision. With resources to improve the quality of grass pitches being limited, an increase in 3G provision could also help to reduce grass pitch shortfalls through the transfer of play, which in turn can aid pitch quality improvements.

Indoor and built sports facilities

ESC has overseen a recent programme of investment into its built leisure facilities, including major refurbishments of leisure centres operated by Places Leisure, at Leiston and Deben. In addition, it has re-procured the management and operation of two former Waveney District Council facilities (Waterlane and Waveney Valley leisure centres) which have also been refurbished and are now operated by Everyone Active. It plans to make a further significant investment to replace and relocate facilities at the existing Felixstowe and Brackenbury leisure centres, in line with local plan proposals to develop a garden village in North Felixstowe.

Overall the assessment found that (taking into account proposed investment in Felixstowe), the District's needs in terms of core swimming pool, sports hall and health & fitness provision will be adequately catered for over the period of the Local Plan.

Key challenges for ESC and partners include the need to provide a safe return to activity post-Pandemic for its residents, and to consider how those in the more rurally isolated parts of the district can be supported to access good quality leisure provision. It will also be critical to support secondary schools to enable their stock of community accessible sports halls to re-open and operate sustainably following the lifting of Coronavirus restrictions, and to consider how some schools could extend the available community offering, and/or better promote and manage bookings to both improve their own income generation and provide additional sports hall capacity to sports clubs and individuals.

Sports halls

East Suffolk has 106 sports halls, of which 19 are 3+ badminton courts in size – or larger. Of the 19, the assessment found 15 to be of 'good', or 'above average' quality. No sites were rated poor quality. There is relatively good distribution of sports hall provision across East Suffolk's main settlements. A new five court hall is planned as part of the new Felixstowe leisure centre, which will replace provision at Brackenbury sports centre (also five courts).

The majority (15 of 19) 3+ court halls are located on education sites. Two of the remaining four (Leiston Leisure Centre, Brackenbury Sports Centre) are operated by Places leisure under contract with ESC. Waterlane Leisure Centre's sports hall is operated by Everyone Active, with the remaining site at Kesgrave being run by a charitable trust. The audit found some issues around general wear and tear of school sports hall sites, such as the need for sports hall floor or lighting replacement. There is also potential to improve the efficacy of some school booking arrangements, and to provide additional staff resource to enable community access to facilities.

Club consultation revealed some availability issues for badminton in respect of existing facilities being fully programmed. There was also expressed demand for improved accessibility to competition standard netball facilities in the north of the District.

Overall, the current stock of sports halls meets the needs of the resident population satisfactorily in 2021. Potential additional demand (around six courts) related to population growth up to 2036 could be accommodated within current stock on the basis of improvements to management and booking arrangements and quality upgrades being delivered on certain school sites.

Swimming pools

There are 31 swimming pool facilities in East Suffolk. When smaller pools and lidos are discounted the number of venues which accommodate pools of at least 160m² reduces to nine which between them have 13 pools. These are well distributed in relation to the main population centres (Felixstowe in the South, Beccles, Bungay and Lowestoft in the North).

Five of the nine facilities are rated good quality, with four; Waterlane Leisure Centre (5 x 25m plus learner pool), Deben (6 x 25m), Leiston (5 x 25m plus learner) and Waveney Valley (5 x 25m) having received significant recent investment into major refurbishment work. Facilities at Felixstowe Leisure Centre (6 x 25m plus learner) whilst rated below average quality are due to be replaced by a new facility located at the North Felixstowe Garden Village.

It is anticipated that future demand (up to 2036) due to population growth can be accommodated within existing facilities (and taking into account new provision in Felixstowe) given their available capacity. There is an opportunity, nevertheless, to consider whether/how to extend availability at smaller community and lido facilities. This could improve accessibility to swimming for residents in areas where barriers to services are particularly high and deliver a positive impact in respect of increased participation in swimming and other aquatic activities.

Schools

In general, there is a reasonably good level of community access to school sports facilities in East Suffolk. In 'normal times' their facilities are operating at around 60-70% capacity based on available community booking information. In terms of management, five of the fifteen schools with 3 court + halls are independent; the remaining ten have academy status. In respect of the Pandemic, schools were (in Autumn 2020) focusing on the safe transit of staff and pupils around facilities and were in the process of considering how and when community sport bookings could resume.

Whilst management and operation of community facilities is without exception handled in-house across secondary schools in East Suffolk, available resources to promote and handle bookings vary. Of the independent schools, Woodbridge School and Ipswich School sports centres (which include extensive indoor and outdoor facilities) offer a significant volume (40 hours plus) of community bookings per week and employ dedicated sports centre staff enable marketing and promotion of their venues. On the other hand, the academy schools able to offer segregated community sports facilities such as Kesgrave and Sir John Leman, tend not to have dedicated staff resource nor do they offer online booking arrangements.

Village and community halls

Reflecting its largely rural geography, East Suffolk has an extensive network of village and community hall facilities. There are 261 such buildings in total across the district, with around 60% of East Suffolk residents living within 800m of such a facility which represents a good level of accessibility when compared to similar authorities of a rural nature.

Research undertaken for this study found a variety of activities taking place in village halls, such as badminton, carpet bowls and exercise classes. Consultation with certain badminton clubs found that in some cases village halls offer a more cost effective, accessible place to participate than school or leisure centre provision.

Whilst (given the remoteness of some villages in relation to services) there would seem to be good potential for village halls to make a greater contribution to meeting the districts sport and physical activity needs, the needs assessment survey response was relatively low. There is, thus, a need for further consultation with parish councils and community partnerships to identify particular facility improvement needs and the scope for greater usage at such facilities.

Health and fitness suites

There are 29 fitness facilities in East Suffolk, containing a total of 1,454 fitness stations. These are mainly located in the northern and southern periphery of the district in the main towns of Felixstowe, Beccles, Lowestoft and Bungay. Main contracted leisure facilities at Felixstowe (41 stations), Leiston (60 stations), Waterlane (90 stations) and Waveney Valley (50 stations) each offer health and fitness facilities. The replacement Felixstowe Centre is expected to include a facility with 100 stations.

Overall and in respect of supply and demand for health and fitness, a deficit of 277 stations by 2036 is predicted taking account of population growth. In meeting this future need, it should be borne in mind that the health and fitness sector is currently emerging from a period of unprecedented disruption as a result of the Pandemic and that there may be some re-calibration of the private sector market. In the light of this, the role of smaller community gyms, (possibly co-located with other local services) in meeting the needs of the more isolated rural parts of the district should be considered.

Indoor bowls

There are five indoor bowls facilities in East Suffolk, three of which are operated by bowls clubs (Sole Bay, Carlton Rd, Beccles). Gunton Hall (a members only facility) is part of a wider leisure resort. The facility at Felixstowe Leisure Centre, where Felixstowe Bowls Club (200+ members) is based is operated by Places Leisure and is due to relocate to the former Deben High School sports hall and there will be the option of increasing slightly in size from a four to a six-rink facility.

Overall the assessment found a good supply of indoor bowls facilities in East Suffolk and no significant anticipated future demand for indoor bowls is anticipated. With this in mind, focus should be placed from a strategic perspective on ensuring that the replacement Felixstowe facility is fit for purpose in the sense of its design, operational and management principles.

Squash courts

There are 22 squash courts distributed across eight sites in East Suffolk. There is good coverage of the district in relation to its main settlements. Two of the three squash facilities at public contracted sites (Leiston and Waterlane) are rated as good quality. The remaining public leisure centre site, at Brackenbury is rated above average and will be replaced by new courts at the new Felixstowe Leisure Centre. There is stable demand for squash in East Suffolk and the generally good quality facilities are well distributed to serve the local resident population.

Whilst projected population increases are unlikely to lead to demand for additional courts, there is a need to maintain the quality and preserve the function of existing courts, such as those at St John Leman and Framlingham College which are of below average quality.

Indoor Tennis

East Suffolk does not have an indoor tennis facility, however, consultation with LTA officers suggests that demand may exist for such a development. This should be considered as part of the linked housing developments such as Felixstowe Garden Village. Lowestoft and Felixstowe are identified within East Suffolk by regional LTA officers as priority locations, with Lowestoft Tennis Club noted to be interested in creating a dome facility at Denes Oval. Felixstowe Tennis Club is also recognised by the NGB as having potential to develop indoor facilities.

Cycling

Of the four formal cycling facilities in East Suffolk, three are trail centres (at Rendlesham and Tunstall Forests managed by Forestry England, and the independently managed Twisted Oaks facility at Brightwell) and a cycle speedway track at Kesgrave Community Sports, home of Kesgrave Panthers Cycle Speedway Club. Each of these is well used offering opportunity for recreational as well as competitive activity across the disciplines of mountain bike and cycle speedway.

ESC is currently preparing a cycling and walking strategy - due to be published for consultation in 2021. It has a focus on improving walking and cycling infrastructure and integration with key development proposals across the two local plan areas.

There is an opportunity for the findings of the emerging walking and cycling strategy to be integrated with this study. This can be achieved by embedding active design principles within the new Felixstowe Leisure Centre development, and also by the Council working with its leisure operators to promote the benefits of cycling, establish connectivity with existing cycling networks and ensure minimum standards in respect of cycle storage provided at its leisure facilities.

Replacement Felixstowe Leisure Centre

East Suffolk's main proposed indoor facility related intervention, endorsed by its Cabinet in September 2019 is to deliver a destination leisure facility in Felixstowe as part of the North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood, as a replacement for both the current Felixstowe and Brackenbury *Leisure Centres*.

The East Suffolk Council, Suffolk Coastal Local Plan makes a number of recommendations in respect of the proposed masterplan that will support a future planning application in respect of the garden neighbourhood including:

- ◀ A new leisure centre in a location which is easily accessible for the existing community.
- ◀ Design and layout that supports inclusive use and a dementia friendly environment.
- ◀ Up to 2,000 dwellings
- ◀ Provision of 630 primary school spaces and early years provision

The 2017 Felixstowe Leisure Centre Feasibility Study identified a preferred site (North development site) which comprises land owned currently by Trinity College, Cambridge. It offers the advantages of an edge of town location with good frontage to the A154, proximity to the rail station and the ability to operate existing provision at Felixstowe up until completion of the new build. In supply and *demand* terms for the core swimming, sports hall and health and fitness elements, findings of KKP's needs assessment support the Council's ambition to deliver a destination leisure centre in Felixstowe. It will incorporate the following facility specification:

- | | |
|---|--|
| ◀ 25m x 8 lane pool | ◀ Spin studio x 1 |
| ◀ Teaching pool 15m x 8.5m | ◀ Thermal suite sauna and steam |
| ◀ 5 court sports hall | ◀ Soft play |
| ◀ Health and fitness gym (80+ stations) | ◀ Clip n climb |
| ◀ Studios x 2 | ◀ Flexible meeting/consultation space (147m ²) |
| ◀ Squash courts x 2 | |

In progressing plans through detailed design and feasibility stages, and in line with the emerging masterplan for the North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood, ESC will need to consider issues such public transport *accessibility* to the new site, and (in line with its emerging cycling and walking strategy) how the centre will adopt the principles of active design⁴ to consider connectivity to existing paths, new residential areas and ensuring safe navigation across the A154.

⁴<https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/active-design>

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Open spaces

The setting and application of provision standards helps inform shortfalls in provision and to ensure new developments contribute to the provision of open space across the area. A number of recommendations are provided that seek to assist in these processes. These are:

Recommendation 1

Sites helping or with the potential to help serve areas identified as having gaps in catchment mapping should be prioritised as opportunities for enhancement

These sites currently help to meet the identified catchment gaps for other open space typologies. Where opportunities are possible, the Council should seek to adapt these sites to provide a stronger secondary role, to help further strengthen their role in meeting the identified gaps.

These sites should therefore be viewed as open space provision likely to provide multiple social and value benefits. It is also important that the quality and value of some of these sites is secured and maintained (Recommendation 2).

Recommendation 2

Ensure low quality/value sites helping to serve potential gaps in accessibility catchments are prioritised for enhancement

The approach to these sites should be to enhance their quality/value to the applied standards (i.e. high quality and/or value).

Summary of low quality/value sites helping to serve catchment gaps

Ref	Site name	Settlement area	Helps to serve provision gap in:
70	Castle Hills	Bungay	Parks
163	Kings Road	Bungay	Parks
224	North Parade Boating Lake	Southwold	Parks
376	Upland Community Centre	Lowestoft	NSN
426	Allenby Park	Felixstowe	NSN, AGS
490	Coronation Sports Ground	Felixstowe	NSN
530	Framlingham Mere	Framlingham	Parks
564	Kendall Green	Felixstowe	NSN
569	King Georges Recreation Ground	Leiston	Parks
621	Pageant Field	Framlingham	Parks
649	Memorial Field	Saxmundham	Parks
753	The Mount	Kesgrave	Parks
783	Waterloo Avenue	Leiston	Parks

Recommendation 3

Recognise low quality and value sites and how they may be able to meet other needs

Where sites of low quality or value appear to fall within an area of sufficiency, a change of primary typology should be first considered. If no shortfall of other open space type is noted or the practicality of enhancing the site is not cost effective, then the site may be redundant or 'surplus to requirements'.

There are 174 sites identified as currently having either lower quality and/or value. Of these 174 sites, 13 are identified as helping to serve catchment gaps in other types of open space. These sites should first be enhanced in terms of quality. Consideration should be given to changing the primary typology or strengthening the secondary function of these 13 sites, to one which they currently help to serve a gap in provision, even if their quality cannot currently be enhanced.

Consequently, there are 161 sites of low quality and/or value, which do not currently appear to serve any highlighted gaps in catchment mapping. The sites are set out in the supporting Excel database. Further exploration into these sites could be undertaken to establish whether any are potentially genuinely surplus to requirements.

Other factors, such as shortfalls in quantity for that provision type, the potential removal of a site creating a different catchment gap and/or the potential to help serve deficiencies in other types of provision should also be considered. The Council may also be aware of other issues, such as the importance of a site for heritage, biodiversity or as a visual amenity, that may also indicate that a site should continue to be protected.

The Open Space Report is a snapshot in time. Whilst significant changes are not as common for open space provision, inevitably over time changes in provision occurs through creation of new provision, loss of provision and/or alterations to site boundaries and management. Population change and housing growth are also another consideration to review when undertaking any update as this may impact on quantity provision levels and shortfalls.

Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy

The following overarching, strategic recommendations have been identified from the PPOSS analysis. These are based on Sport England's key themes of protect, enhance and provide:

OBJECTIVE 1

To **protect** the existing supply of playing pitches and outdoor sports facilities where it is needed for meeting current and future needs

Recommendations:

- ◀ Ensure, through the use of the PPOSS, that playing pitches and outdoor sports facilities are protected through the implementation of local planning policy.
- ◀ Secure tenure and access to sites for high quality, development minded clubs, through a range of solutions and partnership agreements.
- ◀ Maximise community use of education facilities where needed.

OBJECTIVE 2

To **enhance** playing pitches and outdoor sports facilities through improving quality and management of sites

Recommendations:

- ◀ Improve quality
- ◀ Adopt a tiered approach (hierarchy of provision) to the management and improvement of sites.
- ◀ Work in partnership with stakeholders to secure funding.
- ◀ Secure developer contributions.

OBJECTIVE 3

To **provide** new playing pitches and outdoor sports facilities where there is current or future demand to do so

Recommendations:

- ◀ Identify opportunities to increase add to the overall stock to accommodate both current and future demand.
- ◀ Rectify quantitative shortfalls through the current pitch stock.

Linked to the strategic recommendations, the following recommendations are made for each sport:

Football

- ◀ Protect existing quantity of pitches (unless replacement provision is agreed upon and provided).
- ◀ Where pitches are overplayed and assessed as poor or standard quality, prioritise investment and review maintenance regimes to ensure it is of an appropriate standard to sustain use and improve quality.
- ◀ Improve strategic sites, using the LFFP as a guide, and consider updating the priority projects within the LFFP following the findings of this study.
- ◀ Transfer play from sites which remain overplayed, including the transfer of demand from grass pitches to existing and new 3G pitches.
- ◀ Explore pitch reconfiguration at suitable, currently under-utilised sites to better cater for playing formats with identified shortfalls.
- ◀ Work with providers to secure access to unsecure sites and sites not currently offering community use via the creation of community use agreements.
- ◀ Work to accommodate future demand at sites which are not operating at capacity or at sites which are not currently available for community use.
- ◀ Where appropriate, develop partnerships and/or lease arrangements with large, sustainable, development-minded clubs to manage their own sites.
- ◀ Improve ancillary facilities where there is a demand to do so and where it can benefit the wider footballing/sporting offer.
- ◀ Ensure clubs playing within the football pyramid can continue to do so and that they can progress if promotion is achieved (including the relocation of Woodbridge Town FC).
- ◀ Ensure that any large housing developments are provided for and assess the need for new pitch provision through master planning on an individual basis.
- ◀ Where a housing development is not of a size to justify on-site football provision, which will usually be the case, consider using contributions to improve existing sites within the locality.
- ◀ Where a development is of a size to justify on-site football provision, focus on the creation of multi-pitch sites that reduce existing shortfalls, where possible, with accompanying clubhouse provision included given that single pitch sites without appropriate ancillary facilities can be unsustainable.

3G pitches

- ◀ Protect current stock of 3G pitches.
- ◀ Develop additional 3G pitches to alleviate shortfalls, using the LFFP to guide investment.
- ◀ Identify additional sites in Area 3 and Area 6 to fully alleviate identified 3G shortfalls.
- ◀ Support creation of additional 3G pitches above and beyond football training shortfalls if it can satisfy rugby union demand; or, explore creation of 3G pitches that are both football and rugby appropriate when alleviating shortfalls.
- ◀ Ensure that any new 3G pitches are constructed to meet FA/RFU recommended dimensions and quality performance standards to meet performance testing criteria.
- ◀ Ensure that all existing and new pitches that are on the FA register are re-tested every three years to sustain certification.
- ◀ For World Rugby compliant pitches, seek re-testing every two years to ensure provision remains accredited.
- ◀ Encourage more match play demand to transfer to 3G pitches, where possible.
- ◀ Resurface existing 3G pitches that have exceeded recommended lifespan i.e. at Barnards Soccer Centre.
- ◀ Ensure all 3G providers have a sinking fund in place for long-term sustainability.
- ◀ Ensure that any new 3G pitches with external funding have community use agreements in place and seek to use this to also tie in access to grass pitch and other sporting provision, where relevant.

Cricket

- ◀ Protect existing quantity of cricket squares.
- ◀ Work with clubs and grounds staff to review quality issues on squares to ensure appropriate quality is achieved at sites assessed as standard and sustained at sites assessed as good.
- ◀ Address overplay via quality improvements and the installation of NTPs as well as through greater utilisation of the NTPs already in place.
- ◀ Ensure clubs can realise future growth plans and continue to monitor increases in demand to ensure additional teams can be fielded.
- ◀ Pursue improved security of tenure, particularly for Blundeston & Somerleyton, BT Wadringfield and Yoxford cricket clubs.
- ◀ Improve ancillary facilities, particularly those servicing Blundeston & Somerleyton, BT Wadringfield and Lowestoft Town cricket clubs given current issues and plans.
- ◀ Consider options to increase and improve stock of suitable practice facilities, first and foremost focusing on Blundeston & Somerleyton, BT Wadringfield, Melton St Audry's, Nacton, Saxmundham Sports and Yoxford cricket clubs.
- ◀ Consider re-purposing some of the unused squares by means of reducing other playing pitch shortfalls, subject to confirmation from the ECB and Suffolk Cricket that they are surplus to requirements, providing the provision can be brought back into use for cricket if the need ever arises.
- ◀ Ensure that any large housing developments are provided for and assess the need for new pitch provision through master planning (i.e. via a sports needs assessment/feasibility study/assessment of need) on an individual basis.
- ◀ Where a development is of a size to justify on-site cricket provision, ensure that any proposals for new squares will attract adequate demand.
- ◀ Where a development is not of a size to justify on-site cricket provision, or if sufficient demand cannot be attracted, consider using contributions to improve existing sites within the locality.
- ◀ Ensure that any developments nearby to existing cricket sites do not prejudice the use of the provision (e.g. through ball-strike issues).

Rugby union

- ◀ Protect existing quantity of rugby union pitches and areas used for rugby union activity.
- ◀ Improve pitch quality at all sites used by clubs through improved maintenance and/or the installation of drainage systems, particularly at sites containing overplayed pitches.
- ◀ Explore the installation of additional floodlighting at sites that are overplayed as a result of training demand on grass pitches.
- ◀ Explore the installation of World Rugby compliant 3G pitches as a resolution for clubs that would still have grass pitch shortfalls even if quality and floodlighting was maximised.
- ◀ Explore options to increase the pitch stock available to clubs with significant pitch shortfalls.
- ◀ Ensure Lowestoft & Yarmouth RUFC is adequately provided for if its relocation goes ahead, with at least five grass pitches (three floodlit) or a World Rugby compliant 3G pitch and three grass pitches required.
- ◀ Ensure Southwold RUFC's training needs continue to be adequately accommodated in light of proposals at Halesworth Campus Sports Complex.
- ◀ Pursue improved security of tenure for Southwold RUFC via an extension to its lease from Southwold Common Trust.
- ◀ Support all clubs with their aspirations to improve their ancillary facilities.
- ◀ Ensure that any large housing developments are provided for and assess the need for new pitch provision through master planning on an individual basis.
- ◀ Where a development is of a size to justify on-site rugby provision, ensure that any proposals for new pitches will attract adequate demand.
- ◀ Where a development is not of a size to justify on-site rugby provision, or if sufficient demand cannot be attracted, consider using contributions to improve existing local sites.

Hockey

- ◀ As a minimum, protect the seven pitches currently in use by hockey clubs as well as the pitch at Woodbridge School.
- ◀ Ensure future demand can be accommodated at venues currently in use, particularly at Felixstowe School given current capacity concerns.
- ◀ Explore options to accommodate exported demand expressed by Beccles HC.
- ◀ Encourage hockey use at Woodbridge School given the quality of the pitch and look to establish a long-term partnership between a club (or clubs) and the School.
- ◀ Resurface the AGPs as hockey suitable at East Point Academy, Felixstowe School and Framlingham College given age, quality issues and hockey usage levels.
- ◀ Encourage providers to have sinking funds in place at all sites to ensure long-term sustainability.
- ◀ Seek a resolution to the ancillary facility issues at Felixstowe School.
- ◀ Pursue long-term security of tenure at all venues used by clubs through community use agreements.
- ◀ Ensure no 3G pitch conversions are detrimental to hockey and revisit hockey demand if and when a conversion is proposed to ensure that the pitch in question is not required.
- ◀ Ensure any new 3G pitch developments do not make sand-based provision in the locality unsustainable following the transfer of football activity.

Tennis

- ◀ Protect existing quantity of courts.
- ◀ Improve court quality at sites assessed as poor or standard quality and sustain quality at sites assessed as good, especially at sites in use by clubs or that are well used for recreational demand.

- ◀ Linked to the above, improve park courts as a priority to create year-round recreational tennis options to meet local demand.
- ◀ Explore options to further improve the recreational tennis offer via utilisation of technology provided by the LTA to support the customer journey and through investment into facilities and accompanying ancillary provision.
- ◀ Ensure sinking funds are put into place by providers for long-term sustainability.
- ◀ Install additional floodlighting at club-based venues, particularly at sites operating above the capacity guidance.
- ◀ Provide additional court space for clubs operating above the capacity guidance, where it is required, potentially via better utilisation of existing provision.
- ◀ Improve ancillary provision at club sites, where it is required.
- ◀ Support the development of indoor tennis provision in strategic areas and where aspirations exist e.g. in Lowestoft and Felixstowe.

Netball

- ◀ Protect existing quantity of courts.
- ◀ Improve court quality at sites assessed as poor or standard quality and sustain quality at sites assessed as good, especially at sites in use by clubs and for England Netball initiatives.
- ◀ Consider establishing additional floodlighting at club-based venues or at venues that could attract netball demand following installation.
- ◀ Explore options to return exported demand expressed by the Lowestoft Netball League and Atlas Netball Club.

Bowls

- ◀ Protect existing quantity of greens that are in use.
- ◀ Improve green quality at sites assessed as standard quality and sustain quality at sites assessed as good.
- ◀ Seek to improve ancillary facility quality where it is necessary.
- ◀ Improve security of tenure for Bealings, Easton, Felixstowe & Walton, Sweffling and Wrentham bowls clubs.
- ◀ Support plans for a second green to be established at Felixstowe Bowls Club given existing capacity issues.
- ◀ Support Framlingham Castle BC and Woodbridge BC to ensure demand continues to be met, given high levels of membership.
- ◀ Ensure greens at LTAA Sports Ground, Mettingham Bowls Club, Red Triangle Bowls Club, Saxmundham Sports Club and Sutton Recreation Ground remain sustainable and support club users to increase membership.
- ◀ Mitigate any permanent loss of greens at disused sites through replacement provision or through appropriate enhancements to other facilities.

Pétanque

- ◀ Protect existing provision.
- ◀ Ensure provision is provided at Felixstowe Sea Front to a good quality and seek to maximise usage.
- ◀ Explore options to provide more secure provision, e.g. at local authority sites rather than there being a reliance on private facilities.

Croquet

- ◀ Protect existing provision.
- ◀ Sustain quality through appropriate maintenance.
- ◀ Support Thorpeness Croquet Club in its aspirations to improve its clubhouse at Ogilvie Pavilion Sports Ground.
- ◀ Support Ipswich Croquet Club in its plans to relocate to Trinity Park and ensure that the Club remains adequately provided for following this.
- ◀ Further explore croquet demand in other areas of East Suffolk to determine if any additional provision is required.

Athletics

- ◀ Explore opportunities to establish purpose-built facilities, linked to England Athletics current priorities, where demand is particularly high.
- ◀ Support clubs, running groups, events and England Athletics initiatives such as Park Run and pursue increased participation, where possible.
- ◀ Ensure all clubs/groups continue to have home bases to operate from and pursue improved security of tenure where it is required.

Golf

- ◀ Retain all existing golf provision unless separate needs assessments are completed that evidence that a facility can be lost or reduced without it impacting upon demand.
- ◀ Sustain course and ancillary facility quality and seek improvements where necessary.
- ◀ Support clubs in membership retention and potential growth and encourage clubs and providers to work more collaboratively in terms of creating pathways for players.
- ◀ Continue to retain Dip Farm Golf Course as public open space and ensure it can be brought back into use should the need ever arise (unless evidence is provided to support permanent loss).
- ◀ Further explore plans at High Lodge Darsham Golf Course and ensure any proposals are supported by England Golf and Sport England.

Indoor and built sports facilities

Protect: ESC will

- ◀ Work with Places Leisure, Everyone Active, secondary school and academy providers, NGBs and community clubs to support a sustainable return to activity following the coronavirus pandemic.
- ◀ Work with secondary school and academy providers to maintain the quality and preserve the function of existing sports halls on school sites including those which are presently of below average quality.
- ◀ Work with secondary school, academy and community partners to maintain the quality and preserve the function of existing squash courts including those on school sites which are of below average quality.

Enhance: ESC will:

- ◀ Work with secondary school and academy providers at schools with below average quality sports halls to upgrade and improve these facilities.
- ◀ Work with partners such as Active Suffolk to explore the potential to create additional capacity in the school sports hall supply via enhancement of booking arrangements, securing additional staff resource and sourcing external funding support.
- ◀ Work with/through East Suffolk Community Partnerships, town and parish councils to gauge the potential of the village hall network to contribute further to providing accessible spaces for physical activity and identify capital improvements to ancillary and activity spaces at those venues which have the capacity and potential to increase and improve provision.
- ◀ Aim to improve the accessibility of contracted leisure provision to rurally isolated residents and those with health/mobility issues by exploring whether initiatives such as community transport are appropriate for this purpose and could be extended or enhanced.
- ◀ In respect of its emerging Cycling and Walking Strategy, ensure that findings with regard to development of new cycle corridors and improving accessibility to existing routes consider their connectivity to existing and proposed built facility provision.
- ◀ Work with partners at town and parish council level to consider whether and how greater use could be made of targeted smaller community pools and lido provision – to play a role enabling access to such provision for the District’s rurally deprived residents.

Provide: ESC will:

- ◀ Deliver a new destination Felixstowe Leisure Centre as part of which it will:
 - ◀ Ensure that Active Design principles are fully applied in the final facility design in relation to the North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood, including a clear plan in respect of access via public transport, walking and cycling routes, traversing the A154.
 - ◀ Consider how centre design and layout can create a dementia friendly environment.
 - ◀ Work with Places Leisure and the appointed design team to ensure that the swimming pool specification includes appropriate timing equipment and starting blocks to enable competitive swimming to take place.
 - ◀ Work with Places Leisure to develop a sustainable business plan, cognisant of the need to return to a normal trading position by April 2022.
- ◀ Continue to work with Felixstowe indoor bowls club and the EIBA to ensure its needs are fully met within replacement provision.
- ◀ In respect of development of the Brackenbury Sports Centre site, ensure that opportunity in respect of investment of a capital receipt into community sports provision is fully realised.
- ◀ Work with the LTA, Lowestoft and Felixstowe tennis clubs to explore potential for capital investment in indoor tennis facilities. This should be considered as part of the linked housing developments such as North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood.

